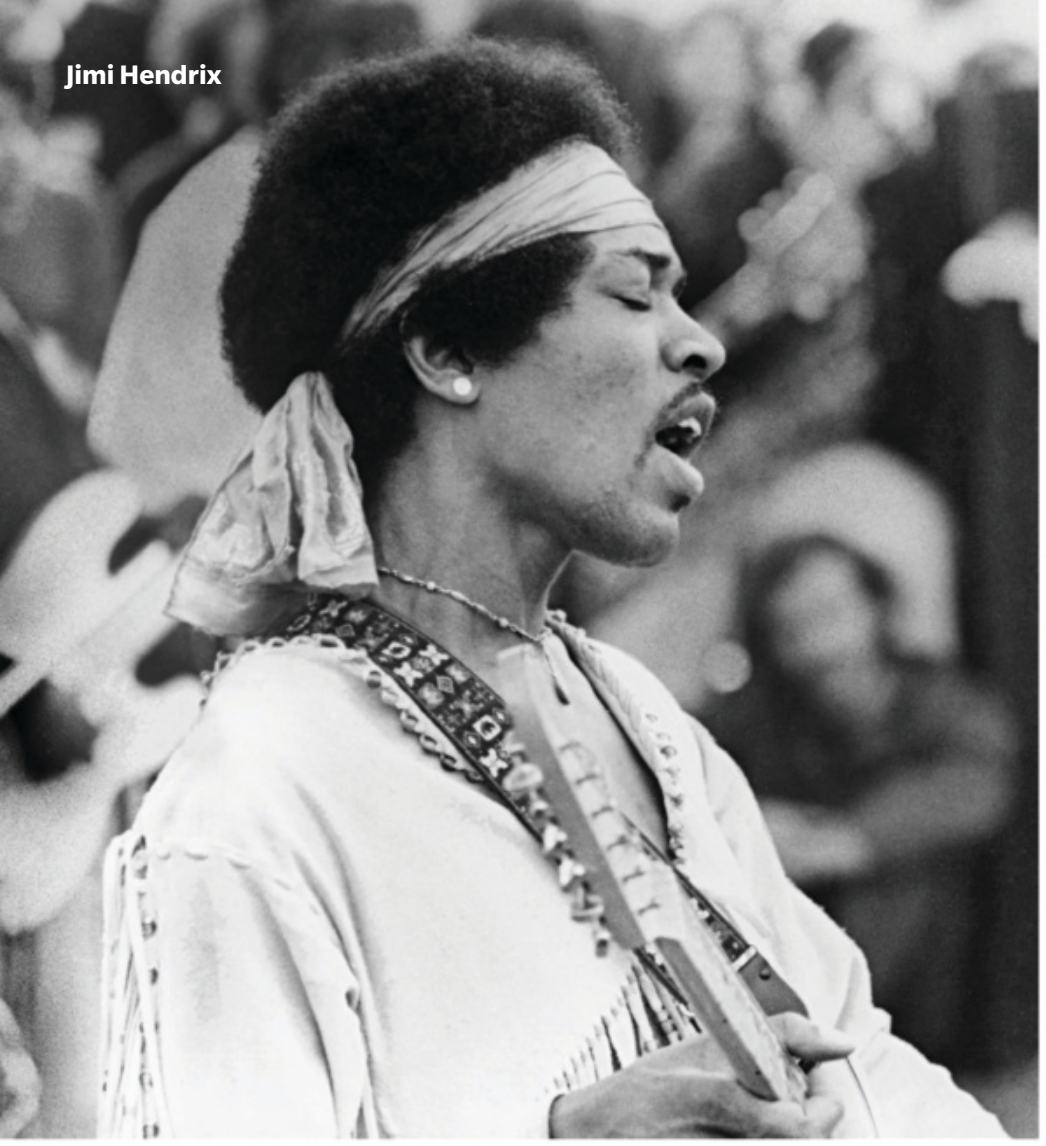
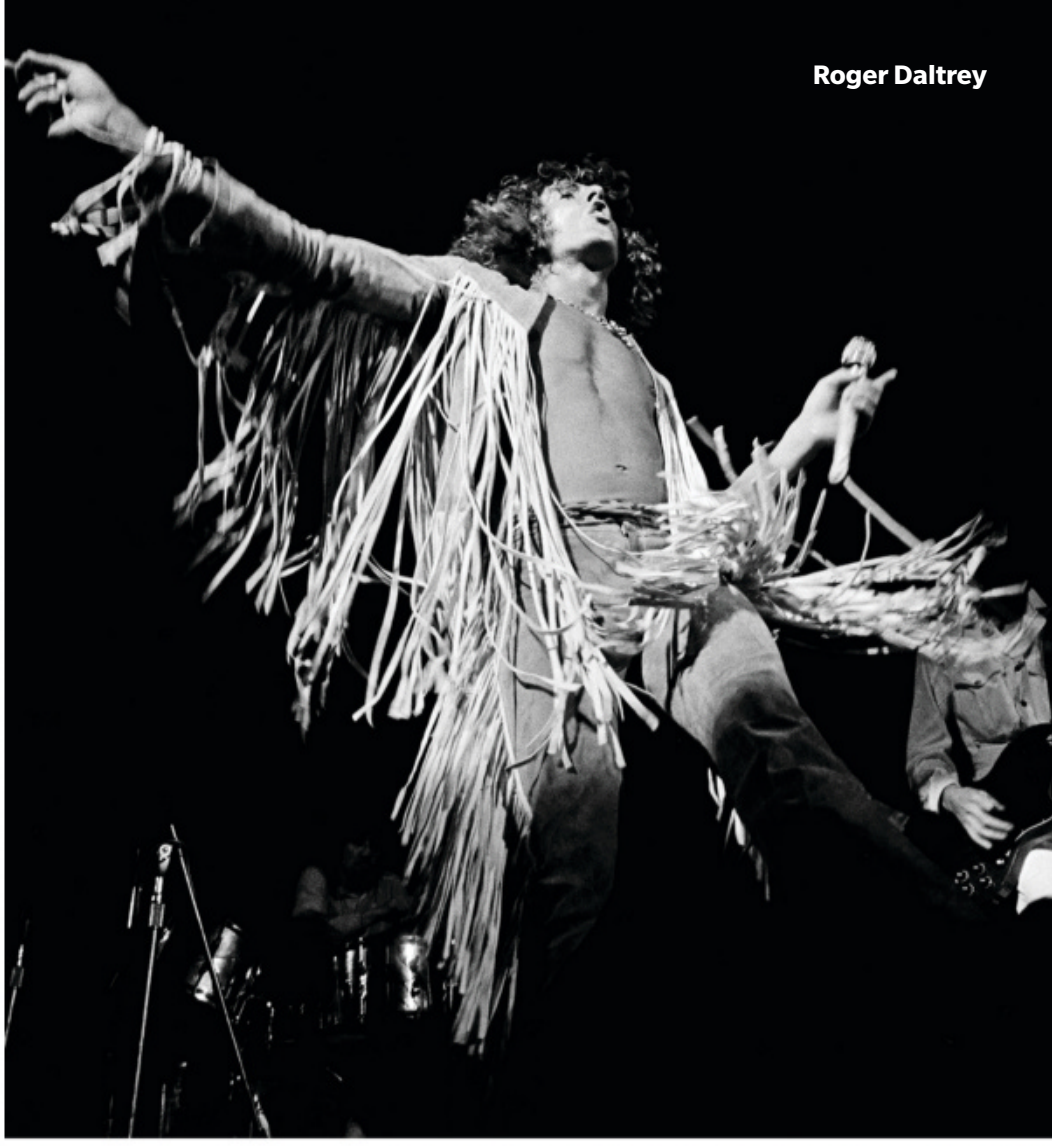


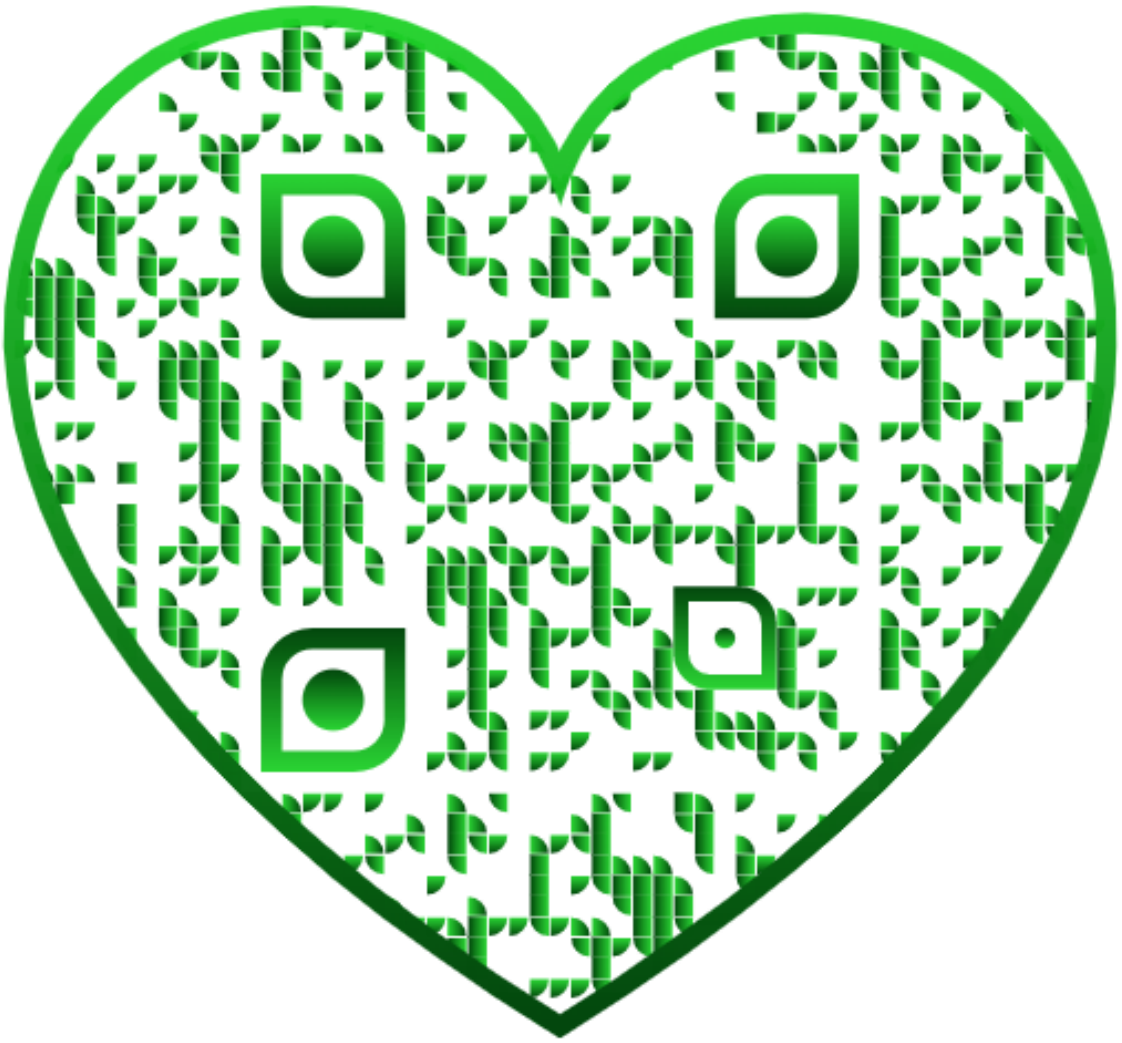
Jimi Hendrix



Roger Daltrey

# AN ADVENTURE. A CELEBRATION.

Woodstock's extraordinary lineup of music delivered star-making performances and iconic moments. The huge audience on hand created a spirit and togetherness not to be forgotten.

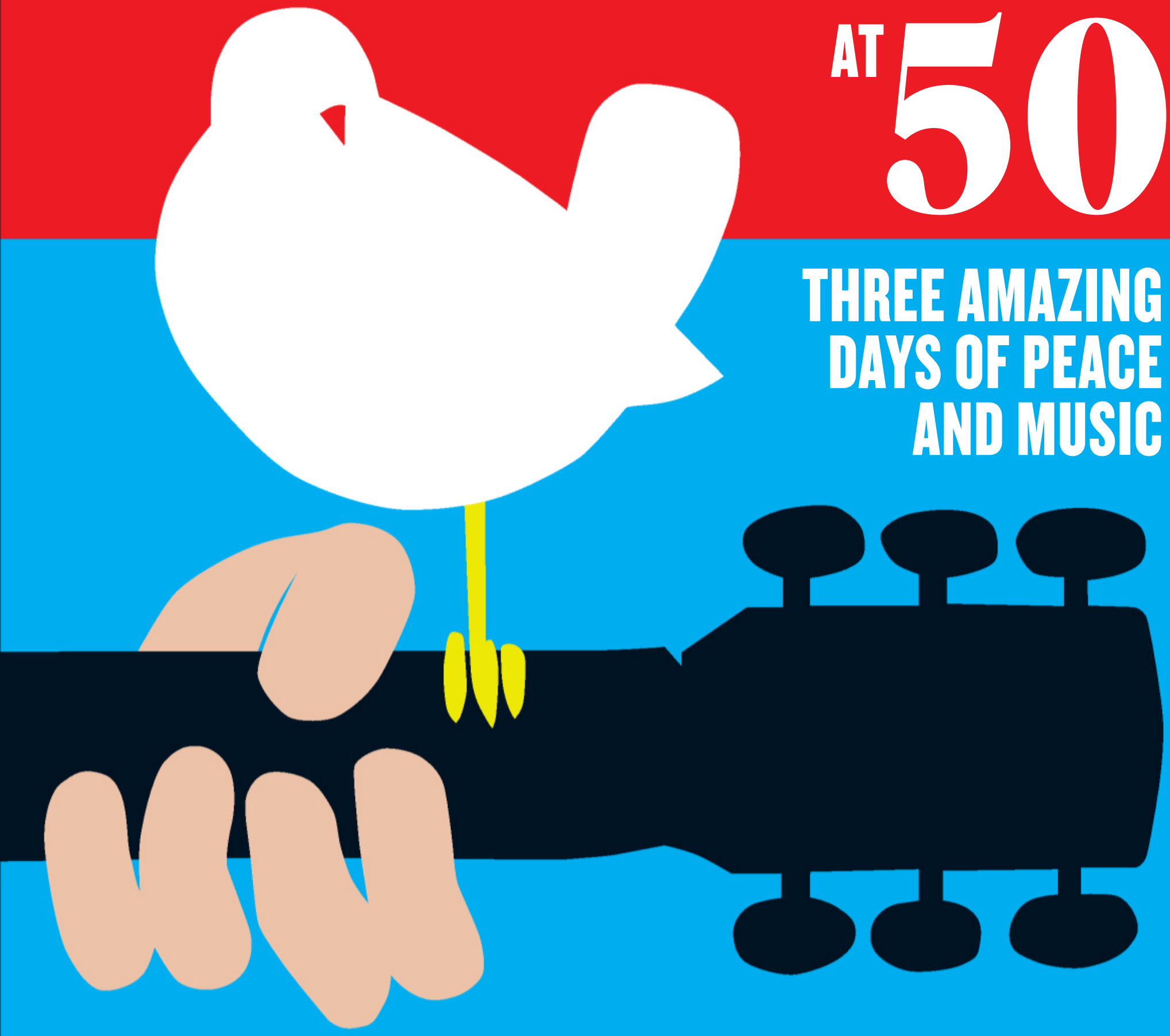


LIFE

# WOODSTOCK

AT 50

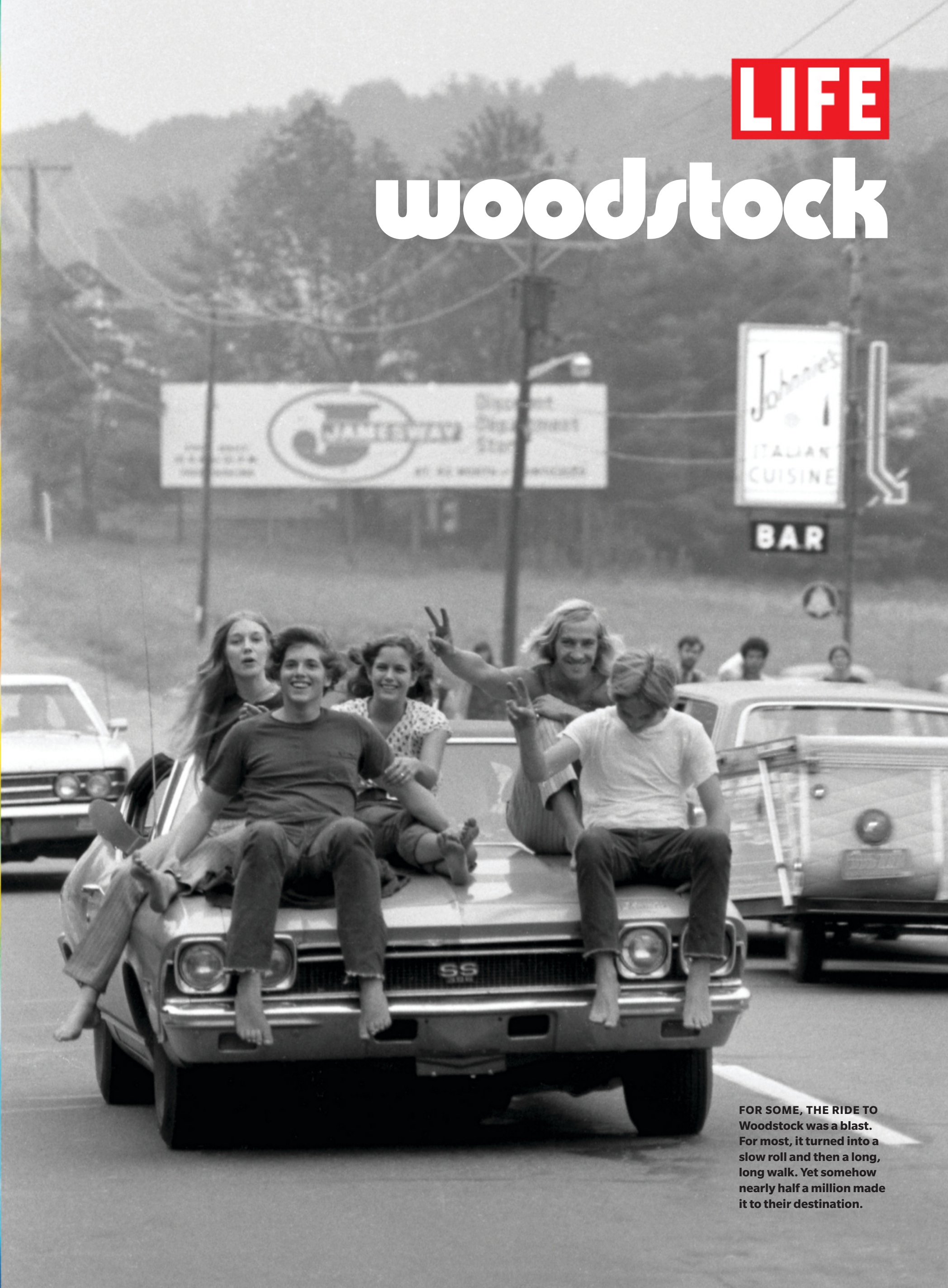
## THREE AMAZING DAYS OF PEACE AND MUSIC



®

LIFE

# woodstock




**FOR SOME, THE RIDE TO Woodstock was a blast. For most, it turned into a slow roll and then a long, long walk. Yet somehow nearly half a million made it to their destination.**

# contents


**4**
## Back to the Garden
Woodstock bloomed during a summer of distress

**10**
## Down to Yasgur's Farm
The festival was a triumph of sheer perseverance

**20**
## A Song and a Celebration
## Day One
It was chaos, then Richie Havens began to play

**31**
### A CONVERSATION WITH WAVY GRAVY
Nobody had more fun than the counterculture clown

**37**
### A CONVERSATION WITH MELANIE
She was an unknown, and she was terrified

**46**
## Day Two
A lineup of legends, and crazy musical surprises

**51**
### A CONVERSATION WITH MICHAEL SHRIEVE
Santana's drummer had a day to remember

**72**
## Day Three
Joe Cocker got it going, Jimi Hendrix finished it off

**81**
### BY THE TIME WE GOT TO WOODSTOCK
Joni Mitchell, among others, didn't make it

**88**
## We Are Stardust . . .
Fifty years later, Woodstock's legacy is everywhere

**96**
### WE ARE GOLDEN
With love from Janis Joplin

**BY THE TIME JIMI HENDRIX closed out the festival on Monday morning with his rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner," he was, in fact, playing an anthem for a whole new culture: They would call it Woodstock Nation.**

LIFE

# Woodstock


EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Kostya Kennedy
EDITOR David Bauer
WRITER Richard Jerome
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Christina Lieberman
CREATIVE DIRECTOR Gary Stewart
DESIGNER Dean Abatemarco
COPY CHIEF Parlan McGaw
COPY EDITOR Joel Van Liew
PICTURE EDITOR Rachel Hatch
WRITER-REPORTER Amy Lennard Goehner
PHOTO ASSISTANT Steph Durante
PRODUCTION DESIGNER Sandra Jurevics
PREPRESS DESKTOP SPECIALIST David Swain

**MEREDITH SPECIAL INTEREST MEDIA**
VICE PRESIDENT & GROUP PUBLISHER Scott Mortimer
VICE PRESIDENT, GROUP EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Stephen Orr
VICE PRESIDENT, MARKETING Jeremy Biloon
EXECUTIVE ACCOUNT DIRECTOR Doug Stark
DIRECTOR, BRAND MARKETING Jean Kennedy
SALES DIRECTOR Christi Crowley
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, BRAND MARKETING Bryan Christian
SENIOR BRAND MANAGER Katherine Barnet

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Kostya Kennedy
CREATIVE DIRECTOR Gary Stewart
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Christina Lieberman
EDITORIAL OPERATIONS DIRECTOR Jamie Roth Major
MANAGER, EDITORIAL OPERATIONS Gina Scauzillo

SPECIAL THANKS Brad Beatson, Melissa Frankenberry, Samantha Lebofsky, Kate Roncinske, Laura Villano

**MEREDITH NATIONAL MEDIA GROUP**
PRESIDENT, MEREDITH MAGAZINES Doug Olson
PRESIDENT, CONSUMER PRODUCTS Tom Witschi
PRESIDENT, CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER Catherine Levene
CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER Michael Brownstein
CHIEF MARKETING & DATA OFFICER Alysia Borsa
MARKETING & INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS Nancy Weber

**SENIOR VICE PRESIDENTS**
CONSUMER REVENUE Andy Wilson
CORPORATE SALES Brian Kightlinger
DIRECT MEDIA Patti Follo
RESEARCH SOLUTIONS Britta Cleveland
STRATEGIC SOURCING, NEWSSTAND, PRODUCTION Chuck Howell
DIGITAL SALES Marla Newman
THE FOUNDRY Matt Petersen
PRODUCT & TECHNOLOGY Justin Law

**VICE PRESIDENTS**
FINANCE Chris Susil
BUSINESS PLANNING & ANALYSIS Rob Silverstone
CONSUMER MARKETING Steve Crowe
SHOPPER MARKETING Carol Campbell
BRAND LICENSING Steve Grune

VICE PRESIDENT, GROUP EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Stephen Orr
DIRECTOR, EDITORIAL OPERATIONS & FINANCE Greg Kayko

**MEREDITH CORPORATION**
PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Tom Harty
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER Joseph Ceryanec
CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER John Zieser
PRESIDENT, MEREDITH LOCAL MEDIA GROUP Patrick McCreery
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES
Dina Nathanson

CHAIRMAN Stephen M. Lacy
VICE CHAIRMAN Mell Meredith Frazier

meredith



Copyright © 2019 Meredith Corporation
225 Liberty Street • New York, NY 10281

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review.

For information on bulk purchases, please contact Christi Crowley in the Special Sales Department at Christi.Crowley@meredith.com.

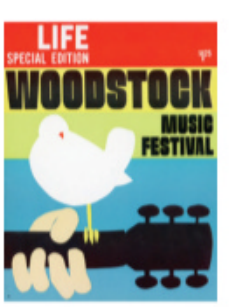


PRINTED IN THE USA

Vol. 19, No. 21 • August 2, 2019



LIFE is a registered trademark, registered in the U.S. and other countries.


**The cover of this special edition of LIFE reprises a 1969 LIFE cover, which was based on an original Woodstock promotional poster designed by Arnold Skolnick—and seen on page 5.**

# back to the garden

**In the summer of 1969, America was reeling: Political turmoil, a wretched war, an erosion of hope. Then, in August, came the miraculous surprise of Woodstock**

AMERICA IS HOPELESSLY DIVIDED. How many times daily do rueful cable pundits, Internet oracles, and TED talkers remind us of this dispiriting state of affairs? We've devolved into tribes, they say, Red vs. Blue, hunkered down in ideological and demographic silos, ranting in echo chambers. The news cycle is a relentless 24/7 barrage of "breaking" cataclysms and outrages, real and imagined. Mass shootings. Foreign cyberattacks. Eroding norms and failing institutions. And all of it stoked by a social media that, while ostensibly designed to bring us together, seems devilishly adept at tearing us apart.

Have things ever been this bad? Or worse? Well, yes. For starters there was the Civil War, in which Americans slaughtered 620,000 other Americans, primarily over the right to own fellow human beings. But really, we needn't go back that far. A half century will do—say to the summer of 1969, a period of social and political strife that threatened to swallow us up in existential despair. The Vietnam War ground on, tearing at the country's heart with no end in sight. It is difficult today to convey the level of anguish that conflict engendered. In our own era, an all-volunteer military ensures that America's wars directly affect only a small slice of the population. These wars are remote, so much so that, after a while, they scarcely create major headlines. But in '69, for families all across the country, Vietnam was deeply, gut-wrenchingly personal because of the draft, which put any healthy young man between 18 and 26 at risk of getting himself bayoneted or blown to bits in a jungle on the other side of the globe.

In 1969, of course, America's wounds were still raw from the traumas of 1968, when the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. seemed to symbolize shattered hopes for racial reconciliation and sparked rioting in more than 100 cities across the country. Two months later, the murder of New York senator Robert F. Kennedy, who had been running for President on a progressive antiwar platform, provoked a national paroxysm of grief—and flashbacks to the 1963 assassination of his older brother President John F. Kennedy, the tectonic tragedy commonly said to have signaled the end of American innocence, if such a thing ever existed. With surging candidate RFK cut down at 42, the 1968 race saw antiwar protests and a violent police response at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. The election itself reflected a deeply conflicted national mood: Republican Richard M. Nixon edged the Democratic candidate, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, by fewer than 500,000 popular votes. (Embattled President Lyndon B. Johnson had declined to run for reelection.) Nixon had won only 43.4 percent of the vote, thanks in part to segregationist firebrand George Wallace, who siphoned off 9 million votes and won five southern states—a howl of white racist grievance in the civil rights era.

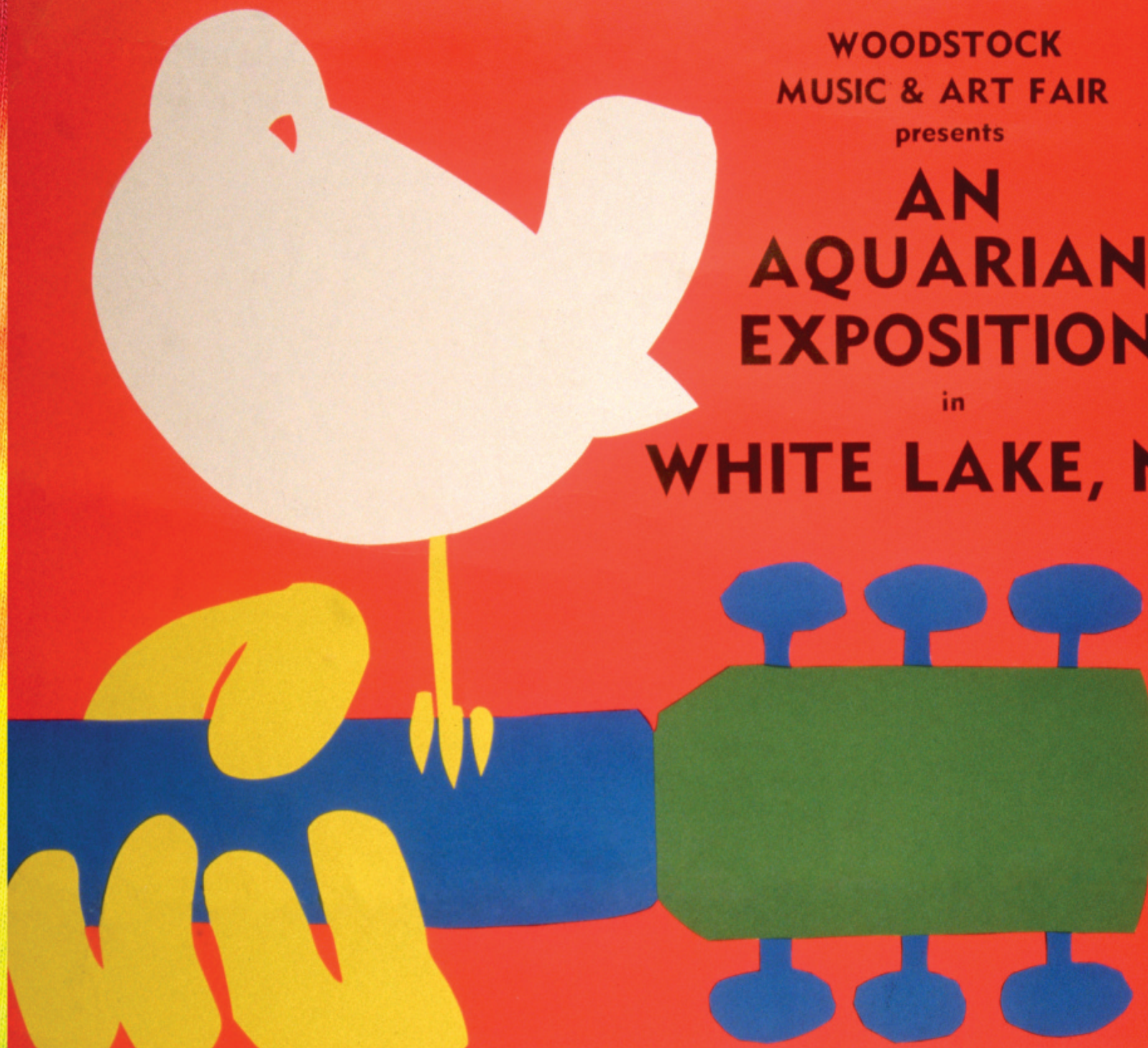
"A lot of people voted for Nixon because they thought he was going to end the Vietnam war," says historian Rick Perlstein, author of *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America*.

WOODSTOCK
MUSIC & ART FAIR
presents

# AN AQUARIAN EXPOSITION

in

# WHITE LAKE, N.Y.



## WITH

**FRI., AUG. 15**
Joan Baez
Arlo Guthrie
Tim Hardin
Richie Havens
Incredible String Band
Ravi Shankar
Sly And The Family Stone
Bert Sommer
Sweetwater

**SAT., AUG. 16**
Canned Heat
Creedence Clearwater
Grateful Dead
Keef Hartley
Janis Joplin
Jefferson Airplane
Mountain
Quill
Santana
The Who

**SUN., AUG. 17**
The Band
Jeff Beck Group
Blood, Sweat and Tears
Joe Cocker
Crosby, Stills and Nash
Jimi Hendrix
Iron Butterfly
Ten Years After
Johnny Winter

ART SHOW

CRAFTS BAZAAR

FOOD

HUNDREDS OF ACRES
TO ROAM ON

MUSIC STARTS AT 4:00 P.M. ON
FRIDAY, AND AT 1:00 P.M. ON
SATURDAY AND SUNDAY.

## AUGUST 15, 16, 17

# 3 DAYS of PEACE & MUSIC

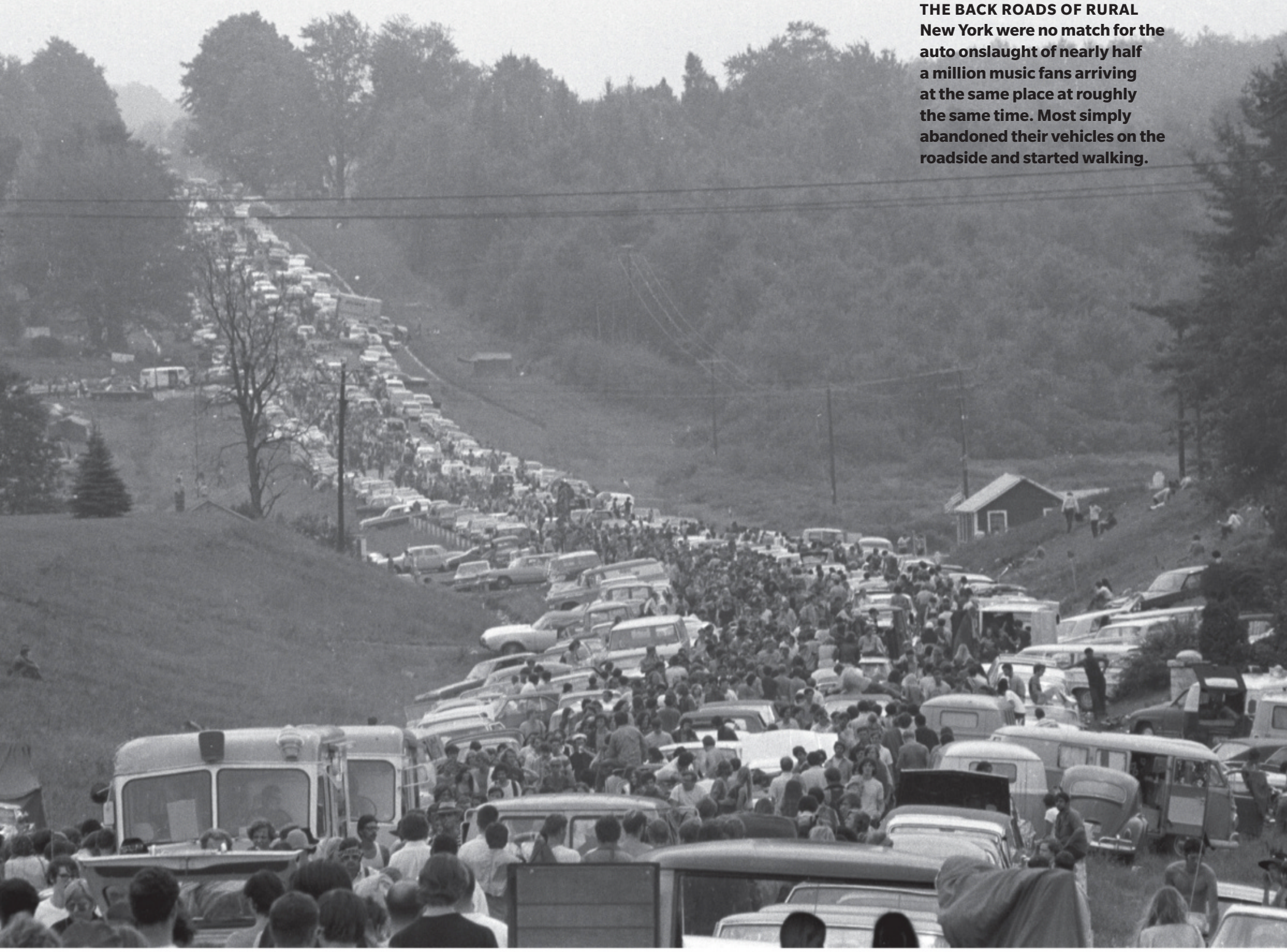
* WHITE LAKE, TOWN OF BETHEL, SULLIVAN COUNTY, N.Y.

"Nixon talked about bringing us all back together and rang in his presidency with an uplifting and unifying speech." ("We have endured a long night of the American spirit," the new President said at his inauguration. "But as our eyes catch the dimness of the first rays of dawn, let us not curse the remaining dark. Let us gather the light.")

Darkness persisted, however. The war raged on, protests intensified, and Nixon would become an increasingly paranoid, divisive leader—with an assist from his incendiary wingman, Vice President Spiro T. Agnew. The Sisyphean nature of the Vietnam conflict was encapsulated in a battle in South Vietnam to shut down a strategically insignificant enemy camp atop a mountain designated "Hill 937." Met with rocket grenades, mines, and automatic weapon fire, the Americans pulled back. For 10 days, they charged up the hill and retreated, over and over, until finally, on May 20, the United States took the objective, at a cost of 84 American troops killed and 480 wounded. But less than a week later, after Army brass had declared a "tremendous, gallant victory," U.S. forces abruptly gave up control of the ground that Army grunts, during the carnage, had dubbed Hamburger Hill. For many Americans, Perlstein suggests, the battle symbolized the futility of the whole misadventure in Southeast Asia "and the impossibility of any hope or redemption. In a sense, 1969 was not so much about division but dashed hopes and disillusionment, especially after the terrible year of 1968. But if 1968 gets all the ink, 1969 was arguably more melodramatic."

**IT WASN'T JUST THE WAR.** If you think our Internet-goosed news cycles are dizzying, consider all the earthshaking events that transpired just in the late spring and summer of '69. A month after Hamburger Hill, on June 28, the Stonewall riots broke out as the gay community in New York City's Greenwich Village rose up and lashed back at police after a raid on a popular gay bar. On July 18, Senator Ted Kennedy drove his car off a bridge into Poucha Pond on Chappaquiddick Island, Massachusetts, resulting in the death of his 28-year-old passenger, Mary Jo Kopechne. Kennedy admitted leaving the scene. "All our national myths were unraveling, including the myth of Camelot," Perlstein says. "Here Kennedy got drunk, drove this girl into the water, and didn't rescue her. It's the absolute reversal of JFK heroically saving all his fellow sailors in the Pacific in the PT boat." On the night of August 8, the idealism of the counterculture took a traumatic hit when members of failed musician Charles Manson's cultish, drug-addled "Family" invaded the Los Angeles home of director

**BY 1969, THE WAR IN VIETNAM had become a political and military quagmire, fully symbolized by the ultimately futile battle of Hamburger Hill. Here, wounded soldiers were evacuated. Young Americans rose in protest; many of them would be drawn together by Woodstock.**



**THE BACK ROADS OF RURAL New York were no match for the auto onslaught of nearly half a million music fans arriving at the same place at roughly the same time. Most simply abandoned their vehicles on the roadside and started walking.**

Roman Polanski (who was out of the country) and butchered his pregnant wife, actress Sharon Tate, and four others.

Still, there were glimmers of light that summer, one shining from 240,000 miles away: On July 20, 1969, astronaut Neil Armstrong took his "one small step," planting his left boot on the lunar surface to become the first human being to walk on the moon. Half a billion people around the world were transfixed, united, if only for a moment, by sheer wonder.

**ANOTHER UNIFYING EVENT** that wild summer was far more down-to-earth—literally in the mud. And it would become a transcendent cultural touchstone, a defining moment for an entire generation. From August 15 to 18, on Max Yasgur's 600-acre dairy farm in the town of Bethel, New York, an unlikely group of investors called Woodstock Ventures bankrolled a music festival. Originally billed as "An Aquarian Exposition: 3 Days of Peace & Music," the event quickly came to be known as Woodstock. It sounds like a quaint country fair, but in fact the festival was designed to be dazzling and monumental. More than 30 acts were slated to perform, representing everything from folk to blues to soul, from hard rock to psychedelia and even '50s doo-wop. Some artists were already famous—the Who, the Grateful Dead, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix; for others, like Richie Havens, Santana, and Joe Cocker, the festival would catapult them to superstardom—with a little help from *Woodstock*, an Oscar-winning documentary film by Michael Wadleigh, which hit theaters the following year.

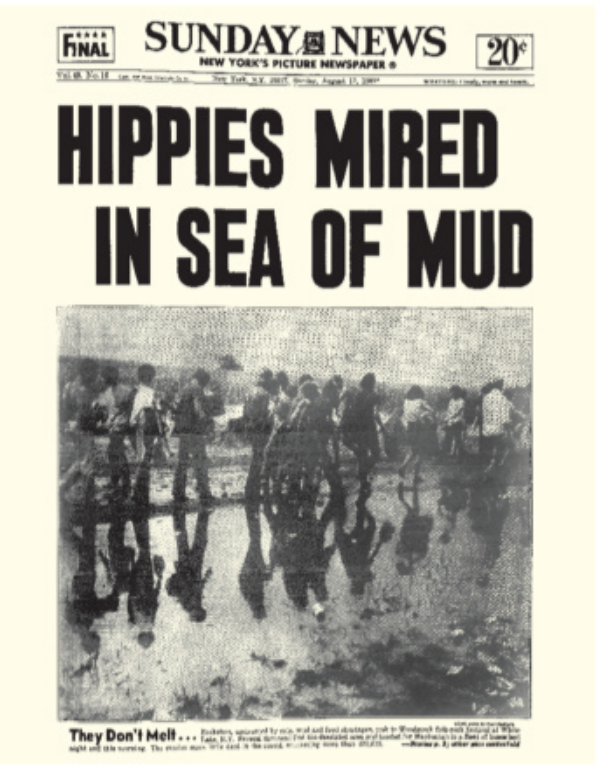
Woodstock, however, was about more than music. Many consider it a supreme expression of the counterculture, the apotheosis of the flower power generation's ideals of peace, love, harmony, and communalism. It might have been a disaster, of course. The concert promoters expected about 50,000 attendees and planned to charge $6 to $18 for one- to three-day tickets ($41 to $124 today). But word spread,

The mass gathering saw plenty of nudity, stoned sex, and unfettered hedonism, which predictably drew some pearl-clutching in certain quarters. But when all was said and done, Woodstock got some pretty smash reviews from the Establishment.

and eventually more than eight times that number showed up, giving organizers little choice but to make the event free. Almost half a million young people in the dank August heat—many of them high on a smorgasbord of drugs—thrown together in a farmer's field with no parents or authority figures in sight. What could possibly go wrong?

Plenty did. Traffic proved a nightmare, clogging the New York State Thruway and back roads around the region. Facilities were strained beyond bursting, leading to food and water shortages—and you can imagine the lines for the porta potties. Drenching rains threatened electrical equipment and turned the site into a vast mud bath.

But on the whole, Woodstock was a triumph of the hippie ethos. The festival saw very few incidents of violence or unrest. It's believed three people died: one from a heroin overdose, one from a burst appendix, and the other was accidentally run over by a tractor while sleeping. To the extent it was needed, a benevolent "Please Force" helped maintain order and also run the kitchen. These gentle souls included members of the Hog Farm commune, a group of peace advocates and hallucinogen aficionados connected with writer Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters (known for traveling the country in a psychedelically painted bus—see page 32—and organizing LSD parties). Woodstock would make a counterculture star of the Hog Farm's genial founder, Hugh Romney, a.k.a. Wavy Gravy (see page 31), a lovable jester and social activist who was a ubiquitous presence at the festival and remains, at age 83, a cherished '60s icon. The mass gathering saw plenty of nudity, stoned sex, and unfettered hedonism, which predictably drew some pearl-clutching in certain quarters. But when all was said and done, Woodstock got some pretty smash reviews from the Establishment.


FINAL SUNDAY NEWS 20¢
NEW YORK'S PICTURE NEWSPAPER

HIPPIES MIRED IN SEA OF MUD

They Don't Melt . . .

"*Time* magazine weighed in," Perlstein says. "Now, *Time* was always the voice of reassurance, suggesting that bad things happen in America but fundamental decency would find its way. The magazine called Woodstock 'history's biggest happening' and 'one of the significant political and sociological events of the age,' and referred to the attendees as 'pilgrims.'" The *New York Times* had initially scoffed at the muddy doings up the thruway, but the Paper of Record reversed itself after *Time* magazine's laudatory take came out. "The *Times* essentially called Woodstock a phenomenon of innocence," Perlstein said, which was seen as a welcome ray of light. "The news had been so dark when it came to young people. There was a continuing spiral of militancy."

Though nonviolent, Woodstock was revolutionary in its own way, symbolizing a generation resolved to cast off the shackles of staid, Eisenhower-era America and to embrace a liberating openness—intellectually, spiritually, and sexually. "Look at TV's *Mad Men,* and you see how shockingly hierarchical and rigid the cultural mores were until the late '60s—then you see something undeniable happen," Perlstein says. "All sorts of aesthetic markers of what's acceptable become looser—wearing a beard used to be considered a provocative act that got people beaten up. When POWs come home from Vietnam, they're sort of like these Rip Van Winkles returning post-Woodstock to these sexually liberated wives, and a lot of them are freaking out. By the same token, there was also this very strong movement among conservatives against sex ed. One of the leaders would wave around a LIFE magazine special issue on Woodstock and say, 'This is what we're up against, naked kids cavorting in the river.' Woodstock became this key symbol; you can't argue that when people think of what loosened things up in America, Woodstock is the story." ●

**ON THE THIRD DAY OF THE festival, a skinny, middle-aged fellow in a distinctly unhip white shirt appeared onstage to greet the fans, most of whom could only wonder, Who is *that*? That was Max Yasgur, on whose land they were all sitting.**

18+

# WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

# AVAXHOME-

the biggest Internet portal, providing you various content: brand new books, trending movies, fresh magazines, hot games, recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price
Cheap constant access to piping hot media
Protect your downloadings from Big brother
Safer, than torrent-trackers

18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages
Brand new content
One site

# AVXLIVE.ICU

AvaxHome - Your End Place

We have everything for all of your needs. Just open https://avxlive.icu

# down to yasgur's farm

**Woodstock might never have happened were it not for a dairy farmer named Max Yasgur who somehow agreed that it would be a great idea to rent his pastureland to a curly-haired kid who wanted to invite thousands and thousands of teenagers to spend a weekend there**

WOODSTOCK WAS A TRIUMPH of persistence, and it began with Brooklyn-born Michael Lang, who in 1969 was a cherubic 24-year-old ex-head-shop owner and neophyte promoter with a broad grin, luxuriant curls, and bottomless reserves of chutzpah. At the time, large all-star concerts were just becoming a thing. In 1967, the Monterey International Pop Festival in California had been wildly successful, featuring the U.S. debuts of the Who, Jimi Hendrix, and Ravi Shankar. The next year, Lang himself had promoted the Miami Pop Festival, with Hendrix as the headliner. "That experience was enlightening," he recalled. "It was clear that the relationship that my generation had with music was different from the previous ones. So, it was decided to do something bigger."

Lang had moved up from Miami to the quaint Catskill Mountains town of Woodstock, New York, which was an emerging bohemian mecca, attracting edgy and up-and-coming young musicians and artists. Bob Dylan briefly rented a room at a local espresso shop; his manager, Albert Grossman, had a sprawling estate and recording studio in nearby Bearsville. A stream of folkies and rockers passed through regularly—Joan Baez; Richie Havens; The Band; Peter, Paul, and Mary; Hendrix; Janis Joplin. "The big turning point was when the rifle shop turned into a psychedelic shop," resident George Quinn would remember. "By '68, it had just mushroomed and you started seeing some really famous people walking along town." Inevitably, music happened—notably the forerunner to the Woodstock festival, a series of open-air jams called "Sound-outs," held in the neighboring town of Saugerties on a farm owned by Woodstock deli owner Pan Copeland. The likes of James Taylor, Tim Hardin, Don McLean, and the Mothers of Invention appeared at these gatherings. Fans would camp out and either make their own food or patronize a concession stand (and toilet facilities) built from converted chicken coops.

Once back in his native New York, Lang bonded with another Brooklyn guy, songwriter and Capitol Records producer Artie Kornfeld, who was two years older than Lang. ("Michael was my second hippie," Kornfeld remembered. "I had signed Debbie Harry . . . and her band the Wind in the Willows, so they were the first hippies I'd met.") The two Brooklynites hatched a plan to hold a festival that would raise funds for them to open a recording studio in Woodstock (which never happened). But first they needed a source of capital—which they

**COOL, CALM, AND BECURLED, Michael Lang seemed to be everywhere at once behind the scenes during every day of the festival, which he'd created at age 24. A year later, the film *Woodstock* would reveal the unflappable promoter as a cultural folk hero.**

**THE FESTIVAL STAFF SET UP A rural headquarters (above) in nearby Bethel—with suitably groovy decor—in what they would dub the Telephone Building. Meanwhile, Lang and Artie Kornfeld (opposite, left to right) willed Woodstock into existence, working from one of the on-site trailers in what became a supreme exercise in problem solving. They were aided by a top-flight cast of staging experts, including the esteemed lighting director Chip Monck (left), who also wound up doing extra duty as the concert emcee.**

They found their investors in a duo who had previously placed the following ad in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Young men with unlimited capital looking for interesting and legitimate opportunities and business propositions."

found in the duo of investor John Roberts, scion of the Py-co-pay dental and pharmaceutical company, and lawyer Joel Rosenman. (This pair had previously placed the following ad in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Young men with unlimited capital looking for interesting and legitimate opportunities and business propositions.")

The four newly minted partners formed Woodstock Ventures, based in a psychedelically decorated Manhattan office on West 57th Street. Then they set about assembling a team: stage designer Steve Cohen; Mel Lawrence, who would supervise construction; technical director Chris Langhart; lighting genius E.H. Beresford "Chip" Monck, who would not only light Woodstock but serve as production supervisor and emcee; and John Morris, to handle artist relations. Lang hired Wes Pomeroy, a former assistant attorney general in the Johnson Administration (among other federal posts) to supervise security.

Now came a scramble to find a venue. The first site the partners found was the Mills Industrial Park in Wallkill, New York, some 40 miles from Woodstock. The local zoning board seemed open to the idea, and granted a permit, though Lang was distinctly unimpressed with the setting. "My first reaction was horror," he wrote in his 2009 memoir, *The Road to Woodstock*. "The flat, bulldozed property looked as if it had been raped. Buzzards were flying around . . . I had pictured walking into an open, pastoral scene of beauty and calm."

As it turned out, he needn't have worried. Though the promoters had already printed up posters, public opposition grew and the permit was revoked. But Lang & Co. found a new ally—a young interior

decorator named Elliot Tiber, whose family owned a motel called El Monaco in White Lake, a hamlet within the town of Bethel. Tiber offered the hostelry, which had seen better days, as a base of operations and proposed the grounds as a concert site. When the organizers found it lacking, Tiber hooked them up with a real estate agent, who drove Lang and others out through open, rolling farm country.

At one point, on Hurd Road in Bethel, Lang shouted, "Stop the car!" As he recalled in his memoir, "it was the field of my dreams . . . I left the car and walked into this perfect green bowl. There, at its base, was a rise just waiting for our stage."

"Who does all this land belong to?" Lang asked the agent.

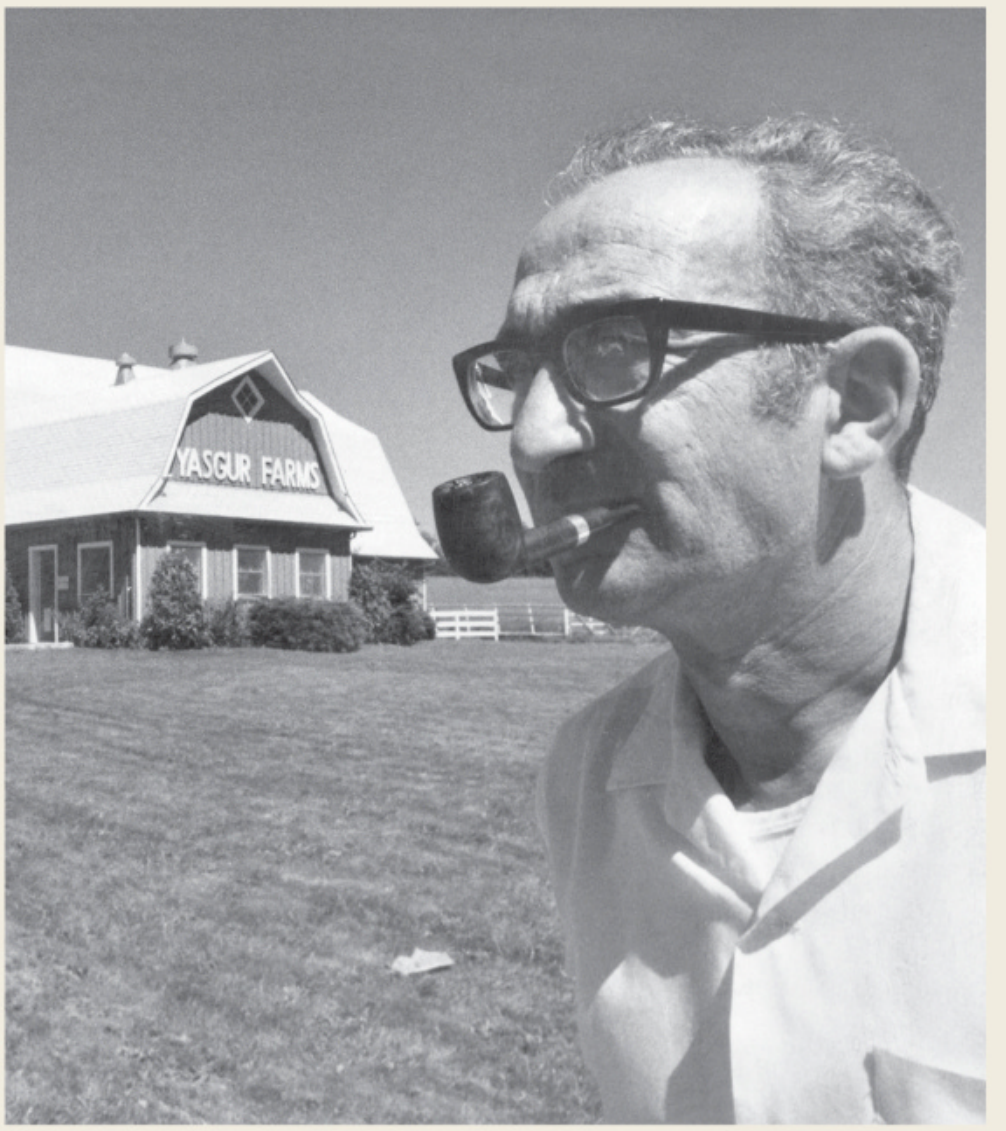
"'Max Yasgur. He's the biggest dairy farmer in the county."

Before long, Lang was meeting with the slender, bespectacled Yasgur and his wife, Miriam.

"You're the people who lost your site in Wallkill, aren't you?" asked the 49-year-old farmer—a native New Yorker who had once studied law in New York City. "I think that you young folks were done a grave injustice over there. Yes, I'll show you my land—we might be able to strike a deal for your music fair."

They agreed on $50,000 (about $345,000 today), plus another $75,000 in escrow in case of damages. "Max was our savior," Lang wrote. "As we shook hands, I realized for the first time that he had only three fingers on his right hand. But his grip was like

**THE CHOSEN SITE (LANG would call it "the field of my dreams") was near the hamlet of White Lake, New York, which is why that name appeared on some of the promotional posters. The stage, despite an army of construction workers, was still not entirely finished when the festival opened, nor were all the fences and gates. It wouldn't matter.**




## Max Yasgur, R.I.P.

What did he know about the young fans of rock music? Only that they had a right to enjoy it.

The "Angel of Woodstock" was a conservative Republican farmer with a bad heart—but a big one. Born in New York City to Russian Jewish immigrants, Max Yasgur was raised on his parents' upstate New York dairy farm, went back to the city to study real estate law, then returned and built the family business into the largest milk producer in Sullivan County. After agreeing to lease his land for what he thought would be a modest-size concert, Yasgur began to have some misgivings as the anticipated crowd numbers grew. But opposition from some locals, who threatened to boycott his milk and even burn him out unless the concert was stopped, only steeled his resolve. When the zoning board met to consider Woodstock Ventures' application, Yasgur had given a simple, eloquent plea on their behalf. "All they are asking for is fair play," he said. "Once we have formed a barrier against those who want to grow their hair long, we can just as well form a similar barrier against those who wear long coats or go to a different church." After Woodstock, Yasgur was shunned in some local quarters, and though he declined to host a 1970 festival revival—and received a $50,000 settlement for property damage—he never regretted leasing his land to Lang & Co. Yasgur sold his farm in 1971, moved to Florida and died of a heart attack two years later at 53, but lives on as an unlikely counterculture hero. "He had no comprehension, at the time this thing started, about their culture, certainly not about their music, but those things didn't make any difference to him," recalled his son, Sam, an assistant district attorney in New York City at the time of Woodstock. (Sam died at 74 in 2016.) "He genuinely believed that people had a right to express themselves. He believed people had a right to be left in peace."

The show would go on, after about 300 people worked around the clock to prepare the site. And, of course, there was the ongoing matter of booking talent. In April 1969, Lang and Kornfeld secured their first act, the red-hot Creedence Clearwater Revival, for $10,000. “Once Creedence signed, everyone else jumped in line.”

iron. I was thinking, ‘He’s cleared this land himself.’”

There were further twists, turns, and complications, including some opposition from locals. STOP MAX’S HIPPY MUSIC FESTIVAL, read one rudimentary plywood sign. NO 150,000 HIPPIES HERE! BUY NO MILK.

But the show would go on, after about 300 people worked around the clock to prepare the site. And, of course, there was the ongoing matter of booking talent, which took considerable negotiation—sometimes in vain. In April 1969, Lang and Kornfeld secured their first act, the red-hot Creedence Clearwater Revival, for $10,000 (about $70,000 today). “Once Creedence signed, everyone else jumped in line and all the other big acts came on,” CCR drummer Doug Clifford recalled. Of course, not every big name could make it (see page 81)—or wanted to. “Led Zeppelin said no, the Doors said no,” Lang noted.

Lang, whose unflappable cool under pressure is apparent in the *Woodstock* documentary, also had to contend with the fiery Yippie leader Abbie Hoffman, who sensed the festival could be an excellent forum for his militantly antiwar political agenda. He also wanted a $20,000 donation to his cause. “I don’t give a rat’s ass about your festival!” Hoffman screamed at moneyman Rosenman. “We’ll bring this motherf---ing festival down around your motherf---ing ears unless you meet our demands.” Hoffman settled on $10,000, which his cadre used to buy a printing press.

Lang, for his part resolved to keep the festival from becoming a political rally. “Politics,” he wrote, “would not be part of the onstage proceedings. It was the place where art and commerce could coexist, where opposing ideas could coexist, where our humanity would come first and our differences would just add color. Elements of the festival were deeply grounded in the underground movement, but the focus would remain peace and music.” ●

**THE GRAND DREAMS OF Woodstock's promoters were nowhere near as grand as the resulting spectacle, when a crowd showed up that was more than eight times what the organizers had originally foreseen, and "the perfect green bowl" filled to overflowing.**

# a song and a celebration

**In all, 32 different acts took the stage at Woodstock. It's safe to say that none of the musicians had any real idea of what they would encounter there until they arrived at the site and looked out into that vast and wild panorama of faces. Here, a day-by-day, act-by-act account of the festival**

**WHATEVER HASSLES THE YOUNG** fans had endured in getting to the festival, once the music began the mood was one of general bliss, whether natural or stoned. As Swami Satchidananda told the crowd, "through the music, we can work wonders."

**THE BIG RED DAIRY BARN OF Max Yasgur's farm became a comforting touchstone for Woodstock campers, who surrounded it with their less-sturdy—but ultimately much-envied—accommodations. Many concertgoers (opposite) arrived with little preparation at all—even without tickets, which proved unnecessary.**

# Day One

## Friday to Saturday, August 15–16

### Richie Havens

**5–5:45 PM**

The festival began in chaos—a crush of scruffy youth, vehicular caravans jamming the roads, the stage still unfinished, equipment not yet up and running. Organizers ferried performers to the performance space via a single helicopter, and many arrived late—first and foremost the Los Angeles rock band Sweetwater, which was scheduled to open the event. Organizer Michael Lang hastily asked singer Tim Hardin to step into the breach, but Hardin took a pass and the task fell to another folk singer, 28-year-old Richie Havens—who was fifth on the schedule and still missing his bassist, who'd yet to arrive. One of few African American exponents of the genre, the Brooklyn-born Havens had risen to some prominence in the clubs and cafés of early '60s Greenwich Village. He was a distinctive, singular performer, with an earthily husky voice and an intensely rhythmic guitar style. Garbed in an orange striped dashiki, Havens took the stage shortly after five p.m., along with bandmates Daniel Ben Zebulon on drums and Paul "Deano" Williams on guitar.

It proved to be a star-making set, an eclectic fusion of folk, blues, and rock including "From the Prison," "Get Together," "I'm a Stranger Here," "High Flying Bird," and "I Can't Make It Anymore." Havens also covered the Beatles' "With a Little Help from My Friends," and sang "Handsome Johnny," which he had co-written with actor Louis Gossett Jr.

The crowd, as they say, went wild. "After a half hour, I said goodbye and tried to get off but they gestured for me to keep going," Havens recalled years later. He obliged with a medley of the Beatles' "Strawberry Fields" and "Hey Jude." He tried again to exit, but still the

crowd—and producers—wanted more. For what turned out to be his finale, Havens started off with the spiritual "Motherless Child," then morphed into the powerfully insistent "Freedom." "I'd already played every song I knew," Havens said, "and I was stalling, asking for more guitar and mic, trying to think of something else to play—and then it just came to me." The blend from one song into the other "came naturally," he recalled. "We thought we were in perfect harmony with the audience, that the atmosphere created was unique. It was an astounding experience."

Immortalized in Michael Wadleigh's documentary film *Woodstock,* Havens's soulful anthem catapulted him to international fame and remains a defining moment of the festival.

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Havens toured and turned out albums, his star undimmed for the next 40 years; one of his most memorable singles was a cover of George Harrison's "Here Comes the Sun." He made numerous TV appearances, recorded music for commercials, dabbled in film acting, and performed at President Bill Clinton's inauguration. A lifelong activist, Havens remained committed to social justice and especially environmental issues. He died of a heart attack at 72 on April 22, 2013. According to Havens's wishes, his ashes were scattered from the air over the Woodstock site, on August 18, 2013, the 44th anniversary of the concert's final day.

## Sri Swami Satchidananda

**5:50 PM**

To emphasize the spirituality and the aura of peace and love meant to animate the concert, organizers turned to—what else?—a guru to deliver the blessing: Indian-born Sri Swami Satchidananda, a Hindu teacher and yoga master, who addressed the crowd after Havens's set. With a luxuriant white beard that made him appear older than his 54 years, Satchidananda sat crossed-legged onstage and delivered a little over 900 words, excerpted here:

*My Beloved Sisters and Brothers:*

*I am overwhelmed with joy to see the entire youth of America gathered here in the name of the fine art of music. In fact, through the music, we can work wonders. Music is a celestial sound and it is the sound that controls the whole universe, not atomic vibrations. Sound energy, sound power, is much, much greater than any other power in this world. One thing I would very much wish you all to remember is that with sound, we can make—and at the same time, break. Even in the war field, to make the tender heart into an animal, sound is used. Without that war band, that terrific sound, man will not become animal to kill his own brethren. So, that proves that you can break with sound, and if we care, we can* make *also.*

*So I am very happy to see that we are all here gathered to create some sounds—to find that peace and joy through the celestial music… America leads the whole world in several ways. Very recently, when I was in the East, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi met me and asked me what's happening in America. And I said, "America is becoming a whole America, helping everybody in the material field, but the time has come for America to help the whole world with spirituality also." And that's why from the length and breadth, we see people—thousands of people, yoga-minded, spiritual-minded…*

*So, let all our actions, and all our arts, express yoga. Through that sacred art of music, let us find peace that will pervade all over the globe. Often we hear groups of people shouting, "Fight for peace." I still don't understand how they are going to fight and then find peace. Therefore, let us not fight for peace, but let us find peace within ourselves first.*

*And the future of the whole world is in your hands. You can make or break. But you are really here to make the world and not to break it. I am seeing it. There is a dynamic manpower here. The hearts are meeting… With all my heart, I wish a great, great success in this music festival to pave the way for many more festivals in*

**THE FIRST ACT TO TAKE THE stage was Richie Havens—and his set lasted longer than he had expected. The organizers backstage, he said, "told me to kill time." He killed all right. For his finale, a grand one, he pounded out the song "Freedom," thoroughly binding the crowd in communal spirit. Said Havens later, "It was the beginning of the world, as far as I was concerned." Opposite: Signposts at Woodstock for the flower power generation.**

**MANY WHO ATTENDED THE festival would later say that much of the delight was rooted in the discovery of half a million people in synchronicity in so many ways. Whether sharing their resistance to the Vietnam War or their love of rock music or recreational drugs, the realization was, Wow, man, there are *a lot* of us!**

*many other parts of this country.*

*But the entire success is in your hands, not in the hands of a few organizers. Naturally, they have come forward to do some job. I have met them. I admire them. But still, in your hands, the success lies. The entire world is going to watch this. The entire world is going to know what the American youth can do to the humanity. So, every one of you should be responsible for the success of this festival.*

The Swami then led the assembled multitudes in a mystical Sanskrit chant: "Hari Om, Hari Om, Hari Hari Hari Om . . . Hari Om, Hari Om, Hari Hari Om . . . Rama Rama Rama Rama Rama Rama Rama Ram."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Satchidananda became an American citizen in 1976 and soon after founded the Integral Yoga Institute in Greenwich Village and Yogaville, an ashram in Buckingham County, Virginia. He was also spiritual adviser to numerous musicians and Hollywood stars. The swami died at 87, in 2002, shortly after speaking at a peace conference in Chennai, India.

## Sweetwater

**6:15–7 PM**

Chaos continued that first evening as performers struggled to make it to the megagig. Finally, Sweetwater, originally slated to open the festival, managed to arrive via chopper. A multiethnic, mixed-gender septet that had played with both the Doors and the Animals, the band was rather a complicated act to stage. Along with lead vocalists Albert Moore and Nancy "Nansi" Nevins, their instrumentation included a flute, cello, keyboards, conga, drums, and bass. That amalgam strained the already flawed technical accommodations. "We were the first electric group onstage with mics for the amps and drums," bassist Fred Herrera recalled to music journalist Rona Elliot. "So we were essentially the sound crew's sound check, so everything was intermittent. I could sort of hear from the main speakers what was going out to the audience. But I could not hear what was going on on the other side of the stage, and they could not hear us." Added keyboardist Alex Del Zoppo, "Albert [Moore] ran into someone he knew and dropped a little of that brown acid, which was not a good idea."

Nonetheless, Sweetwater assembled onstage and opened their nine-song set with an altogether different interpretation of Richie Havens's closer, "Motherless Child," and finished with "Let the Sunshine In," from the musical *Hair,* and the rousing gospel tune "Oh Happy Day" which drew a big hand from the audience.

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** The promising band played *The Red Skelton Show* later in 1969, but three days afterward a run of terrible luck began to strike—lead singer Nevins suffered serious injuries in a car accident that left her with some brain injuries for a number of years and permanent vocal cord damage, though she later recovered and still sings today. Sweetwater produced two albums before disbanding, but tragedy continued to hound its members—cellist August Burns fell out of a construction elevator in 1979 and died of pneumonia shortly thereafter; drummer Alan Malarowitz was killed in a 1981 car crash; and flutist and vocalist Moore, a former police officer, died of lung cancer in 1994. That year, the surviving bandmates reunited for the 25th anniversary of Woodstock. In 1999, a VH1 TV movie titled *Sweetwater: A True Rock Story* starred Amy Jo Johnson as the 1960s Nevins and the Mamas & the Papas vet Michelle Phillips as the older Nevins.

## Bert Sommer

**7:15–8 PM**

He has been called the lost star of Woodstock, and his tale is as haunting as the ethereal tenor voice that brought 300,000 people to their feet—then faded from history. Bert Sommer? That's likely the puzzled reaction most would have when finding him on the roster of artists who appeared on the festival's first day. Sommer was a folk-rock singer-songwriter, just 20 years old in 1969, who had performed with the Left Banke and the Vagrants, fronted by Leslie West, who later cofounded Mountain.

If you've never heard of Sommer, you may well have seen him: With his mass of curly locks, he was the model for the program for the West Coast production of the groundbreaking stage musical *Hair*. Sommer costarred in the show's L.A. production, along with singer Jennifer Warnes—who would inspire him to write the beautiful ballad "Jennifer." He moved to New York with the cast and in early 1968 recorded his first album. A friendship with record producer Artie Kornfeld, who booked acts for Woodstock, ensured Sommer a slot at the festival.

Introduced by announcer John Morris as "the rather magnificent Mr. Bert Sommer," he took the stage at around seven p.m. Barefoot, in flared pants and a headband, Sommer sat cross-legged with his guitar and sang 10 songs—opening with "Jennifer"—that captivated the vast audience at Yasgur's farm. His pièce de résistance was an achingly gorgeous cover of Simon & Garfunkel's "America" that earned Sommer a standing ovation. "It was really intense," he told the Albany *Times Union* years later. "As far as you could see, they were standing up. It was really something."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** "For me, Sommer did a wonderful set on that first day—then he completely disappeared from the mythology of Woodstock," *Wall Street Journal* music critic Jim Fusilli told ABC News in 2009. "You see bands like Santana and artists like Richie Havens and Melanie who were not

**FOR THE YOUTH WHO ARRIVED at the festival, Woodstock was something of an instant utopia: no parents, benevolent police, not a scary authority figure to be seen. It provided the ultimate sense of freedom—freedom to smoke and drink, freedom to engage in illicit commerce (above), freedom to copulate, freedom to do pretty much anything one felt like doing. Like freedom to beat a drum till you dropped.**

particularly well known at the time, whose careers just exploded because of Woodstock. For Bert, nothing." Sommer, for whatever reason, was not included in Wadleigh's Woodstock documentary, though he does appear in D.A. Pennebaker's 1994 film, *Woodstock Diary*. By then it was too late for Sommer to enjoy the exposure. After Woodstock he scraped out a spotty career, with a few albums and some high points—opening for Ike & Tina Turner and Jefferson Airplane, appearing at Carnegie Hall and on the festival circuit. But Sommer faded into obscurity, playing small clubs, bedeviled by drug and alcohol use. Just a month after his last gig, in Troy, New York, Sommer died of a respiratory ailment in 1990, at age 41. In 1994 a Woodstock memorial plaque was erected to commemorate festival performers. Bert Sommer's name was omitted. But in 2009, Rhino released a six-CD set for Woodstock's 40th anniversary—including three tracks by the "rather magnificent" young troubadour who showed such promise that steamy August day.

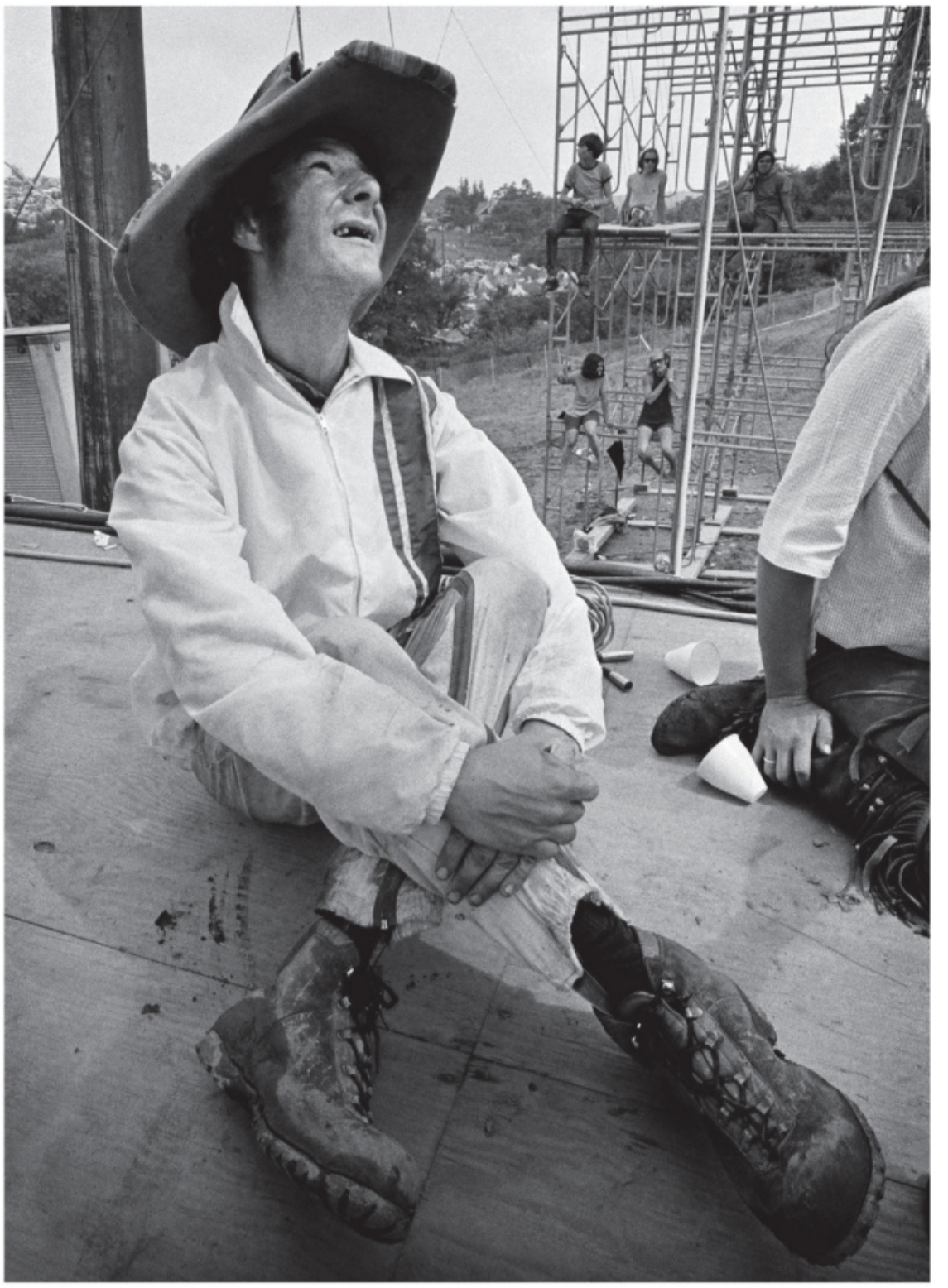
## Tim Hardin

**8:45–9:30 PM**

Bob Dylan once called Tim Hardin the country's "greatest living songwriter." Hardin's most renowned composition, "If I Were a Carpenter," is a folk standard, interpreted by everyone from Bobby Darin to the Four Tops to Robert Plant. Seldom remembered today, the blues-influenced singer-guitarist-pianist was a compelling and influential figure. "What set him apart from his contemporaries was a rich, artful voice and a fistful of songs that hinted at despair, drug abuse, and a bruised romantic sensibility," observed Graeme Thomson in Britain's *Telegraph*. After serving in the Marines, Hardin came up through the Greenwich Village café scene, but along the way developed an intractable drug habit, sparking erratic behavior onstage and off which hampered his career—and would eventually lead to his early death. At Woodstock, festival organizer Michael Lang had sought to launch the event with an acoustic set, and before tapping Richie Havens he'd turned to the 27-year-old Hardin, a personal friend. "When I approached him, he was strumming his guitar and singing to himself," Lang recalled in his 2009 memoir *The Road to Woodstock*. "[I asked] 'Hey, Tim, you want to open this thing up?'

"'No way, man! I can't go on now—not me, not first! I can't deal with that!' He looked at me in desperation… I knew he was fragile—he'd only recently kicked a heroin habit by getting on methadone—and I didn't want to push him."

Once he'd pulled himself together, Hardin followed Sommer with a 10-song set including his compositions "If I Were a Carpenter" and "Reason to Believe" (later a hit for Rod Stewart), starting off solo, then joined by a



**WAVY GRAVY (ABOVE) AND his communal group the Hog Farm had been enlisted by the Woodstock organizers to provide "security," in a distinctly friendly form. He became a memorable figure at the festival—and more so in the *Woodstock* documentary—an ever-cheerful presence, with his gap-toothed grin and laughably large hat. The film turned him into an icon of the counterculture. And, at 83 (opposite), he still is.**

# A Conversation with Wavy Gravy

## One of the sudden stars of Woodstock was, and is, a lovable and generous soul

Journalist and humorist Paul Krassner described him as "the illegitimate son of Harpo Marx and Mother Teresa." At 83, he remains the clown prince of the counterculture, a warm, earthy spirit who embodies the generosity and mischief of the hippie ethos. Born Hugh Nanton Romney, which sounds rather like a buttoned-up banker, he is known to the world as Wavy Gravy, a nickname long ago bestowed by B.B. King. Wavy's résumé reads like a map of late-20th-century bohemia. He was a Greenwich Village poet and roving monologuist who was managed by Lenny Bruce when he made a live album in L.A. while he was opening for jazz immortal Thelonious Monk. Wavy was an auxiliary member of the Merry Pranksters, the peripatetic LSD-espousing cohorts of author Ken Kesey (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*). He's a founding member of the Hog Farm, a California collective that is one of America's longest-running communes, which helped set up stages for rock concerts and put on carnival-like shows of their own.

In 1969 the Woodstock organizers enlisted Wavy and his Hog Farm compatriots to help serve as a kind of benign security force; the commune insisted on also providing a free kitchen for concertgoers. Wavy was recruited to make public service announcements during the festival—and immediately became a beloved figure, immortalized in the *Woodstock* film. Since then he has been heavily involved in charity work. Wavy helped start the Seva Foundation, which helps underserved communities around the globe receive medical help, especially eye care and surgery; and for more than four decades he and his wife, Jahanara Romney (a former TV actress), have run Camp Winnarainbow, teaching performance arts to kids. And . . . he is the inspiration for Ben & Jerry's Wavy Gravy ice cream, sold from 1993 to 2001.

**How did you and the Hog Farm get involved with Woodstock?** We had started driving across the country putting on these shows called "The Hog Farm and Friends: An Open Celebration," and we would set up a palette for amazement to occur—we might have hundreds of

people working on one painting and had these inflatables we'd blow up and you could walk inside them. We're trucking along and the phone call came in from Stan Goldstein [who hired production staff for the festival]: Would you do this thing at Woodstock? Stan was aware of what our touch was—that we could work with people. We said we'd be delighted but we'd like to do a free kitchen. When we got off the plane at Kennedy there's all the world press and klieg lights and cameras going. Someone says, "Oh, the Hog Farm—you guys are gonna do security." So I said, "Well, do you feel secure?" And the guy said yes. And I said, "See it's working." Then he asked, "C'mon, what are you gonna use for crowd control?" And I said, "Cream pies and seltzer bottles." The reporters all wrote it down.

**How did you get public-address duty?** I was spotted by Chip Monck, production coordinator, and he grabbed me to make support announcements. I never announced a band, but I did talk about what you could do, where you could go if you were hurt or you're having trouble with your psychotropics, or whatever.

**What was it like making announcements to all those masses of people?** I just let it roll over me—it made the hairs of my arms leap to rigid attention and that's one of my favorite situations.

**At one point you addressed the fact that there was some bad LSD floating around the place.** Yes. I said, "It's just manufactured poorly and if you're in doubt about your acid, give some to the guy who sold it to you and see what he does." And that kind of eased tensions.

**And of course, you set up the kitchen.** It was run by my wife, along with [Hog Farmers] Lisa Law and Peter Whiterabbit. We set up a feeding station where we could feed hundreds of people, which was probably enough to cover the ones who didn't have any money and were really hungry. My morning announcement to the big multitudes was "What we have in mind is breakfast in bed for 400,000." That's when we introduced hippies to granola. They'd never seen it before; they were in the mud in their sleeping bags and we brought it to them in Dixie Cups and they looked at us and said, "What is this s--t, gravel?" But they tried it and they liked it. The granola manufacturers of the world owe us a tremendous debt.

We also established a tent for if you were having trouble with your psychotropics. I went down there and there's this guy going, "Miami Beach, 1944, Joyce, Joyce!" and there's this 300-pound Australian doctor sitting on top of him. I asked the guy, "What's your name?" And he said, "Bob." Then, I said, "Your name is Bob. Guess what Bob? You've taken a little acid, and it's gonna wear off." He said, "Oh, thank you, thank you." He just wanted to know it was gonna wear off and when he was near normal, I said, "See that sister coming through the door with her toes in her nose? That was you four hours ago. Now *you're* the doctor, take over." And that way the scene regenerated itself.

**Did you feel the sense of community?** There were all these kids from all over America and let's say they were not too thrilled about the fracas going on in Southeast Asia. But they were kind of alone, and suddenly there's a half a million of them in one place and they know that they're not alone. It was utterly amazing, and everybody pitched in and helped everybody else and there was a great beauty to that.

FURTHER
7UP

**THE MUCH-CELEBRATED BUS named Further (opposite), once used by Ken Kesey and his Merry Pranksters and made famous in Tom Wolfe's 1968 book, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test,* was a fitting visitor at Woodstock. A less comfortable attendee was the singer and brilliant songwriter Tim Hardin (above), who resisted a request to be the festival's opening act; he eventually gave a performance that, in the end, left his bandmates baffled.**

backup band including Richard Bock, Steve Booker, Gilles Malkine, Glen Moore, and Ralph Towner. The performance started off well, but then at one point, Hardin rattled his bandmates. "He suddenly threw a title of a song at us that he had not yet written," recalled rhythm guitarist Malkine (who now tours with partner Mikhail Horowitz, doing a satirical folk-parody act). "His wife, Susan, had written a poem called 'Snow White Lady' about heroin, so he said, '"Snow White Lady" in F,' and he put this crumpled piece of paper on the keyboard and started playing, and so we just went along with him … Okay, you might do that in a café somewhere, but, Jesus Christ, the whole world was looking at us! It was so disastrous that afterward I quit the music business for many years."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Hardin didn't quit the business, but drug problems and stage fright plagued the last decade of his life. Shuttling between England and the States, he recorded a few albums—*Suite for Susan Moore and Damion: We Are One, One, All in One* (dedicated to his wife and son); *Bird on a Wire*; *Painted Head*; and *Nine*. On December 29, 1980, Hardin was found dead on the floor of his Hollywood apartment; he was 39 years old.

## Ravi Shankar

**10–10:45 PM**

A thundering rain had begun to fall when Indian sitarist Ravi Shankar took his turn, along with bandmates Ustad Alla Rakha and Maya Kulkarni. At 49, Shankar had enjoyed a richly successful career in India and Europe as a leading interpreter of his country's classical canon. During the 1960s he came to prominence in the United States, thanks in large part to his work with violinist Yehudi Menuhin and his most famous sitar pupil, George Harrison; two years earlier, Shankar had performed to great acclaim at the Monterey Pop Festival. In 1968, he had composed the score for the film *Charly,* for which actor Cliff Robertson won an Academy Award. Meanwhile, the music of India was growing increasingly popular among young fans, embraced by the Byrds and the Rolling Stones as well as the Beatles. At Woodstock, Shankar faced a sympathetic audience, but he was nervous

about the coming thunderstorm and the sea of humanity before him. "I am frightened in case something goes wrong with so many people," Shankar told *New York Post* rock reporter Al Aronowitz. But in the end, his trio's three song set—"Raga Puriya-Dhanashri," Rakha's "Tabla Solo in Jhaptal," and "Raga Manj Kmahaj"—was magical. "He woke up that audience and took them along with him on this soaring musical journey," said Gilles Malkine, who had just left the stage with Hardin. "Nobody else could touch that."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** In 1971 Shankar headlined Harrison's Concert for Bangladesh and his career flourished for another four decades, during which he toured widely and taught at several universities. The beloved sitarist soured on hippie culture, however, especially its indulgence in drugs. In his autobiography Shankar dismissed rock audiences as "strange young weirdos" and did not look back fondly on his festival gigs, where he said the audiences were "shrieking, shouting, smoking, masturbating, and copulating—all in a drug-crazed state…I used to tell them, 'You don't behave like that when you go to hear a Bach, Beethoven or Mozart concert.'" Ravi Shankar died at 92 in 2012.

## Melanie

**11–11:30 PM**

Melanie—born Melanie Safka—was a doe-eyed, largely unknown 22-year-old singer-songwriter from Queens (later Long Branch, New Jersey) who had come up through Greenwich Village folk clubs. She had just released a debut single that would become a modest hit, "Beautiful People." Her husband, producer Peter Schekeryk, had asked the organizers—whose offices were in the same building as his—if she could perform at the festival. She arrived with her mother, also a singer, and when the Incredible String Band balked at going on in the rain, Melanie (see interview, page 37) stepped in. Before she took the stage, announcer John Morris had exhorted the audience, "This is the

**INITIALLY FRIGHTENED BY THE sheer size of the crowd, sitarist Ravi Shankar gathered his bandmates and his nerve and produced a stunning performance, despite the heavy rainstorm that began during his set.**

largest crowd of people ever assembled for a concert, it's dark, you can't imagine how many of you there are. Light some matches and look who you have next to you." The shy singer was overcome by the display (which is thought to have begun the tradition of lighting matches at rock concerts). With her distinctive voice—clear and powerful, with a gravelly edge—Melanie sang seven songs: "Close to It All," "Momma, Momma," "Beautiful People," "Animal Crackers," Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man," "Tuning My Guitar," and "Birthday of the Sun." She connected immediately with the festival crowd, and while her performance wasn't featured in Wadleigh's film, she essentially became a star overnight.

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Her experience at the festival inspired Melanie to write her first major hit, "Lay Down (Candles in the Rain)," performed with a gospel group, the Edwin Hawkins Singers, and released in 1970. Other big sellers she wrote and recorded in the early '70s include "Brand New Key" (also called the "Roller Skate Song") and "What Have They Done to My Song, Ma" (which others have recorded as "Look What They've Done to My Song, Ma"), "Bitter Bad," and a cover of "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow." Melanie, now 72, has toured and has recorded more than 30 albums over the past half century, and won an Emmy for writing the lyrics to "The First Time I Loved Forever," theme to the TV series *Beauty and the Beast*.

## Arlo Guthrie

**11:55 PM–12:45 AM**

The curly-mopped son of folk legend Woody Guthrie, 22-year-old Arlo had made his own name with the droll satire "Alice's Restaurant Massacree," which appeared on his debut album in 1967. He arrived at Woodstock with a stellar quartet including jazz drum virtuoso Paul Motian, best known for his work with the sublime pianist Bill Evans. When the rains came, Guthrie figured he'd be sitting the evening out. "But we decided to go for it," Lang wrote. "By then, Arlo, thinking he was off the hook, had dropped some acid. He wasn't up for going on, but we talked him into it. He did a great set." Guthrie opened with the compelling "Coming into

**THE BACKSTAGE AREA BECAME a fertile meeting ground for the artists, who found themselves talking with old friends and young comers. In one such encounter (top), Joan Baez and Arlo Guthrie had an impromptu chat. Guthrie was enjoying the buzz and recognition from his song "Alice's Restaurant Massacree." Baez, at 28 just six years older than Guthrie, was already a folk music legend. A true unknown at the time, Melanie (at the festival, above, and, opposite, in 2010) made a name for herself at Woodstock.**

# A Conversation with Melanie

## When she arrived to perform at Woodstock, she was little-known—and terrified

Singer-songwriter Melanie Safka-Schekeryk, 72, describes herself now as having been "the oddball" of her high school, a pigtailed beatnik out of place in small-town Long Branch, New Jersey. Painfully shy, she found release in music. Her mother, also a singer, would take Melanie into Greenwich Village on weekends, frequenting the proliferating jazz and folk venues. There the youngster planted the seeds of her 50-year career.

**So, it was you and your mom in the Village?** We'd see jazz greats like Sun Ra and Horace Silver and sometimes my mother would sit in and sing. And I'd bring my guitar, strapped over my back, of course, because no self-respecting folk singer carried a guitar case—those were Juilliard people. Sometimes I'd sing in Washington Square Park, which was much different then, just a quiet little park. I had a really big voice, which was one of my assets, though some might have thought of it as a nuisance. I'd sing and attract a crowd, but I was so shy that after I sang, I'd just walk away. I also sang in cafés and coffeehouses.

**When you got to Woodstock, you were largely unknown.** I had recorded a song, "Beautiful People," that became what they called a turntable hit. But it wasn't promoted, and I bet only about 2 percent of those 400,000 people at Woodstock knew of me.

**How did you even get invited to perform at the festival?** Peter Schekeryk, my husband [who died in 2010], was a producer and he had an office in the same building as Artie Kornfeld and some of the people putting together Woodstock. Peter said to them, "Oh, Melanie should be there." I had no idea it was gonna be big. I had this picture of families and picnic blankets, arts and crafts.

**So tell me about the big day.** My mom drove me up from New Jersey. We hit traffic, I figured there must've been an accident. We got closer and now I know this traffic has something to do with where I'm supposed to go. We head up to this hotel in Bethel and I get out of the car and I walk into the lobby and there's Janis Joplin! Now the only famous person I had ever met before was Marcel Marceau in high school. She's surrounded by media and she's slugging Southern Comfort and being Janis Joplin. And I'm like, oh my God, I gotta get out of here. What am I doing here?

Suddenly I hear my name, and someone's telling me, "Melanie, Melanie, we gotta get into the helicopter." And this is when the terror starts to mount—we're talking terror as in I'm probably going to die here. We take off and I look down and I see what looks like some weird, colorful crops, and I said to the pilot, "What is that?" And he said, "It's people." I said, "No, I mean the stuff with color." And he said, "Yeah, it's people." And I'm thinking, no, no! I'd never been in anything bigger than a little Greenwich Village box stage, you know? I'm thinking, God, I've got to get out of here!

So they let me into this little tent. Every once in a while, they'd come and say, "You're on next," and I tried to breathe, and I'd think, What am I going to do? What am I going to do? I didn't even have a set list. Then someone would come along and say, "Never mind." It started to rain and I thought, Ah, that's it. It's raining. Everybody will go home because it's raining! Of course they're gonna go home, it's raining! And right in the middle of my reverie, after Ravi Shankar, they said, "You're next"—and this time it was for real.

**How'd it go?** I got up onto that stage and I had a moment I don't think one other person had. Mind you, I was not altered, I did not do any drugs, didn't drink. I was a purist. I was very uncool in that time to be that way. I started walking toward the stage, feeling like I'm walking the plank to my certain doom. And then—I left my body. I actually watched myself get on the stage, and I hovered over my shoulder. I heard nothing, it was very silent, and I watched this person who was me sit down, and at one point instantaneously I came back to myself. Something verging on magic happened. I was singing "Beautiful People" and it so resonated with the crowd that I got an instant response, just from me and a guitar. I sort of sensed this flow of power, this appreciation of what I was doing, a kindred spirit thing happening.

**Your life pretty much changed overnight.** The next day I was being called by television shows to be on panels of anthropologists to discuss the significance of what had happened. I was so ill-prepared; I wasn't even slightly articulate. But I realized it was something really big I'd just done.

Los Angeles," (about smuggling drugs into L.A. from London), a performance Wadleigh's *Woodstock* film elevated to a countercultural moment. "The tune plays with a montage of shaggy fans passing around joints," wrote Geoff Boucher in the *Los Angeles Times*, "and Guthrie's song instantly became a generation's soundtrack for blowing smoke in the face of authority." Guthrie also sang "Wheel of Fortune," "Walking Down the Line," "Oh, Mary Don't You Weep," and "Every Hand in the Land," closing his 50-minute set with the hymn "Amazing Grace." Recalling the event to *Smithsonian* magazine 40 years later, Guthrie said, "We knew that it was historic in proportion. Nothing like this had ever happened before, planned or by surprise. When you realize that most historic events are written in hindsight—you don't realize you're in a historic event at the time—so it was special to be in a historic event and know that it was just that."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Mere days after Woodstock, Arthur Penn's film *Alice's Restaurant,* based on Guthrie's song, hit big screens around the country. The singer enjoyed his one Top 40 hit with a 1972 cover of Steve Goodman's "City of New Orleans," and he has toured ever since, while occasionally dabbling in film acting. Now 73, Guthrie performs often for charity, notably raising money to fight Huntington's disease, the devastating brain disorder that killed his father.

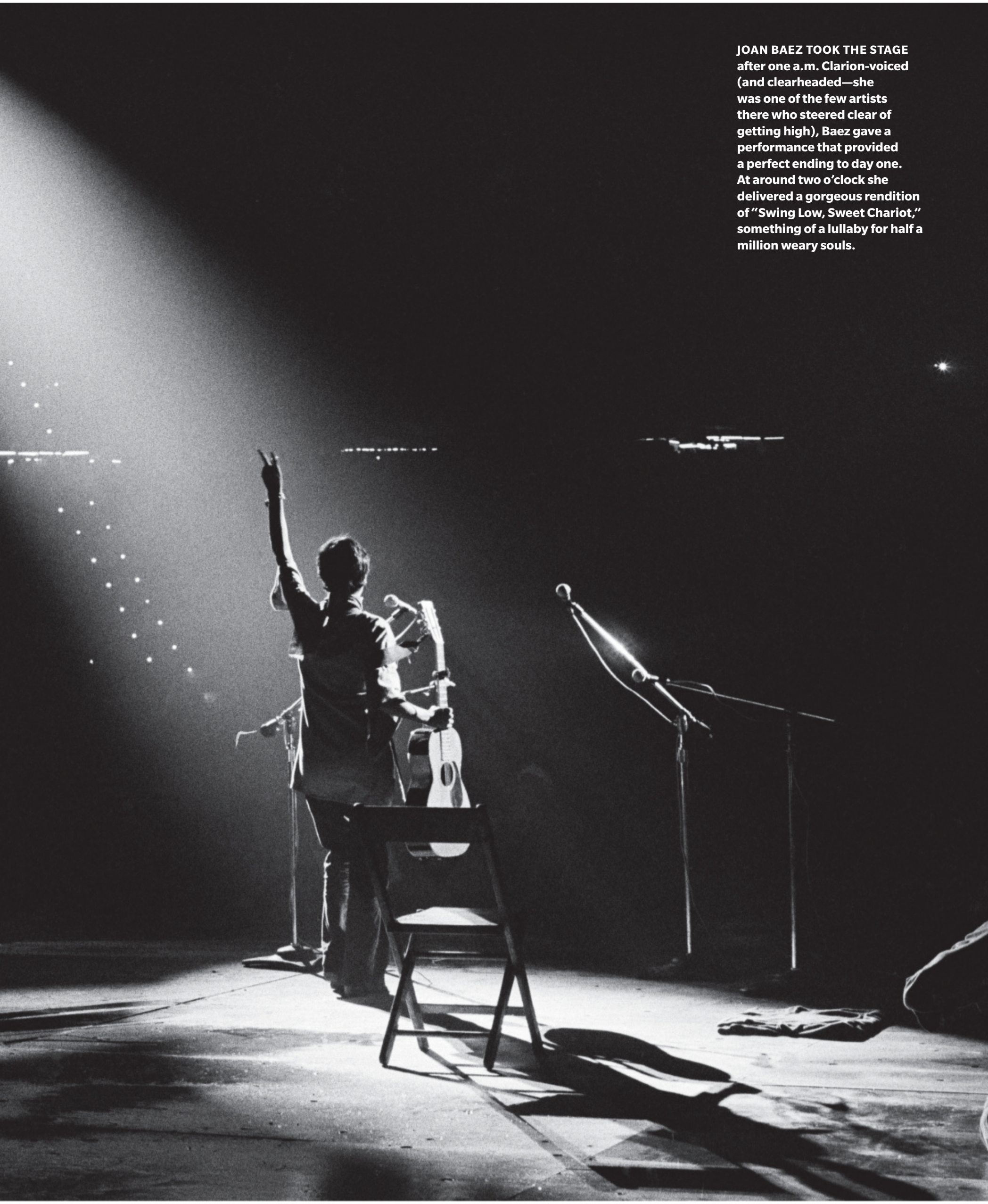
## Joan Baez

**1:30–2:15 AM**

At 28, the "Queen of Folk" was already an elder stateswoman of '60s music. Her personal and musical relationship with Bob Dylan, which had blossomed in Beat-bohemian Greenwich Village, helped cement that reputation. But above all it was her clarion voice (Dylan likened it to "that of a siren off some Greek island"), her songwriting, and her passion for civil rights and social justice that vaulted Baez to international acclaim. Baez's first three albums went gold, and by 1962 her prominence was such that she landed on the cover of *Time* magazine. Six months pregnant with her son, Gabriel (now a drummer), when she appeared on the Woodstock stage, Baez was a calm and unflappable figure amid the behind-the-scenes chaos; she also avoided the festival's drug culture. "I was always running into Janis Joplin and saying, 'You wanna come over sometime and have tea?'" she later recalled. "She'd just look at me like I was crazy!" Well after midnight, Baez began an 11-song set, belting out a rousing rendition of the gospel song "Oh Happy Day," after which she said a few words about her husband, David Harris, who at the time was behind bars for resisting the draft. She sang Harris's favorite labor anthem, "Joe Hill," and nine other songs, including some country-rock pieces co-written with Gram Parsons, and a powerful a cappella "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," ending with an encore of "We Shall Overcome," which closed out the first day's performances at about two a.m.

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** In 1971, Baez enjoyed one of her biggest hits with a cover of The Band's "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down." (She and Harris divorced amicably two years later, and during the early 1980s Baez dated computer pioneer Steve Jobs.) Her raven hair now white, the 78-year-old has worked nonstop for more than half a century, the voice still powerful, her reputation only burnished with time, and her political edge sharper than ever. In 2017, she composed a tune about the new White House occupant. "This thing just came bubbling out in the middle of the night," she said. "It was called 'Nasty Man' about He Who Shall Not Be Named."

*You're gonna build a wall, the*
*big-liest wall,*
*the beautifulest wall 'round our*
*borders.*
*But here's what I think,*
*You better talk to a shrink,*
*'cause you've got serious*
*psychological disorders…* ●



**JOAN BAEZ TOOK THE STAGE after one a.m. Clarion-voiced (and clearheaded—she was one of the few artists there who steered clear of getting high), Baez gave a performance that provided a perfect ending to day one. At around two o'clock she delivered a gorgeous rendition of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," something of a lullaby for half a million weary souls.**

**DESPITE THE UNCOOPERATIVE** weather and the general chaos, the joy was palpable in the massive amphitheater, especially when the music was providing the psychic energy. Years later, many would remember those potent communal feelings— rather than the myriad minor, or even major, discomforts.

**IN THE SPIRIT OF CREATIVE freedom, it was pretty much "each to his own" when it came to expressing oneself at Woodstock. In this now iconic photograph by Jim Marshall, one couple found their own groove while others around them paid little notice.**

**ONE KIND OF PEACE CAME IN** the form of sleep, wherever one could find it. On Saturday, the music began shortly after noon and continued until nearly nine o'clock the following morning.

# Day Two

## Saturday to Sunday, August 16–17

### Quill

**12:15–12:50 PM**

By the Saturday morning of day two, conditions at the festival had reached crisis stage. The site was awash in rain and mud; there were food and water shortages and grossly inadequate sanitation and bathroom facilities for a half million people. What's more, hundreds of thousands of would-be attendees were still stranded on the clogged thoroughfares around Bethel. At one point, New York governor Nelson Rockefeller considered sending 10,000 National Guard troops to the festival but was dissuaded by concert organizers who feared an infusion of armed military would only inflame the situation. What seemed to save the day was an overwhelming communal spirit—the mass of humanity, some surely chemically mellowed, proved remarkably cooperative.

Against this backdrop a Boston group known as Quill opened up the festival's hot and muggy second day. "They were an upbeat young band in the unenviable position of getting things going while the sound was being adjusted," Michael Lang recalled. An eclectic quintet founded by brothers Jon and Dan Cole, Quill mostly played small clubs in the Northeast, but they had also opened for some

**AMONG THE VERY FEW high-functioning "services" at Woodstock was the free kitchen run by the communal Hog Farm group. The contributions from the group, led by Wavy Gravy, included the delivery of "breakfast in bed for 400,000," which Wavy now insists was the introduction of granola to the masses.**

big-name talent, including the Who, the Kinks, Sly and the Family Stone, the Grateful Dead, and Janis Joplin. The Woodstock organizers had previously enlisted Quill to play free concerts at local prisons, mental hospitals, and other facilities to generate good will among locals in advance of the festival. On the festival stage, the band played a four-song set: "They Live the Life," "That's How I Eat," "Driftin'," and "Waitin' for You." They also employed a move that had usually worked well in smaller venues—tossing various percussion instruments into the crowd to encourage the audience to play along. Quill's set was warmly received, but unfortunately, it's one of the festival's forgotten acts: Though the *Woodstock* documentary cameras were rolling, the footage couldn't be used because of a sound glitch.

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Quill released its first album not long after the festival, but the group's exclusion from the hit film hampered promotion efforts. The band broke up around 1970 and eventually both Cole brothers left the music business entirely. Jon now runs Light on the Earth Systems, which advocates for solar power; Dan is a private investor and management consultant, though he still writes music.

**THE IMPROMPTU SATURDAY performance by Country Joe McDonald (above) served as a wake-up call. The gentle feeling of the day (opposite) was thoroughly roiled by Country Joe when he launched into his popular ditty protesting the war. Sang Joe, "Come on mothers throughout the land / Pack your boys off to Vietnam . . . Be the first one on your block / To have your boy come home in a box." The crowd joined in and sang along.**

## Country Joe McDonald

**1–1:30 PM**

There were some classic performances at Woodstock, others lost to history, and a few that became iconic, thanks in large part to Wadleigh's documentary. One of the iconic ones came courtesy of a 27-year-old rocker whose onetime Communist parents had named him for Joseph Stalin. Known as Country Joe McDonald, he had, in 1965, formed the psychedelic rock band Country Joe and the Fish with his partner Barry "Fish" Melton—and had been scheduled to perform later in the festival. However, at this juncture on day two, a relatively unknown band named for its front man and guitarist, Carlos Santana, was slated to go on—but the whole group hadn't arrived yet. McDonald, who was just hanging out at the time, was asked to go up and keep the audience entertained. Ready to oblige, he grabbed a guitar and sang a folkie set, opening with "Janis," his ode to ex-girlfriend Janis Joplin. After a few more tunes, the crowd response was tepid at best.

"Not too many people were paying attention to me," McDonald recalled. "I was just Muzak or something. I knew my job was just to go up and kill time. But after [a while] I got more confident." With that, McDonald pulled out one of his group's signatures, the "Fish Cheer," a call-and-response in which the audience is asked to spell out *fish* one letter at a time. Except the f-word in this case had little to do with gilled aquatic animals.

"I said, 'Give me an *F*.' And everybody turned and looked at me and said, '*F*.' Then I said, 'Give me a *U*.' And they yelled back '*U*.' And it went on . . . "

McDonald then finished up with another fan favorite, the sly antiwar ditty, "I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die Rag." Now came one of Woodstock's galvanizing moments, as 400,000 mud-caked souls sang along to the chorus:

*And, it's one, two, three, what are we fightin' for?*
*Don't ask me, I don't give a damn*
*Next stop is Vietnam;*
*And it's five, six, seven,*
*Open up the pearly gates,*
*Well, ain't no time to wonder why,*
*Whoopee! We're all gonna die.*

Midway through, McDonald stoked the audience to an even higher pitch.

"Listen, people, I don't know how you expect to ever stop the war if you can't sing any better than that. There's about 300,000 of you f---ers out there; I want you to start singin'! Come on!

"And it's one, two, three . . . "

Following Country Joe's performance, Wavy Gravy made one of his periodic between-set announcements, this one to address reports of bad acid circulating through the festival. "It's not poison," the affable entertainer assured the masses through the mic. "It's just poorly manufactured."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Still very active at 77, Country Joe has made more than 30 albums and written hundreds of songs. McDonald ran into a legal squabble in 2003 when the daughter of the late, great jazz trombonist Kid Ory sued him for copyright infringement over the "One, two, three" chorus of his "Rag," the melody of which derives from Ory's 1926 classic, "Muskrat Ramble." The court ruled that Ory had waited too long—three decades—without bringing suit.

## Santana

**2–2:45 PM**

With that, Santana was finally all present and accounted for and ready to take the stage. Mexican-born founder Carlos Santana, 22, had moved to San Francisco as a young teen. Distinctive for its Latin-infused rock sound, his group had made some waves around the Bay Area and was about to release its debut album. They had a big-time ally in promoter Bill Graham, powerhouse owner of San Francisco's legendary Fillmore Auditorium. Little known when they took the Woodstock stage, they were instant stars by the time they walked off, thanks to an eight-song set that lit up the festival. It started with "Waiting," followed by the slow and hypnotic "Evil Ways," "You Just Don't Care," "Savor," "Jingo," "Persuasion," and then "Soul Sacrifice"—which, as featured in the

**ONE OF THE BREAKOUT ACTS at Woodstock was Santana, led by its namesake, guitarist extraordinaire Carlos Santana (above, at right, with the group). Perhaps no other artists benefited more from the exposure at the festival than this band, especially when the *Woodstock* documentary hit the screen. The film made an instant star of drummer Michael Shrieve (opposite), whose electrifying solo jolted the adoring crowd.**

# A Conversation with Michael Shrieve

## When the young drummer took the stage, his life was about to change—again

You can't take your eyes off him. One of the *Woodstock* documentary film's most compelling sequences is a dynamic drum solo during Santana's song "Soul Sacrifice." The man with the sticks seems barely more than a boy, a kid having the time of his life, possessed by the love of music. Bay Area–born Michael Shrieve was 20 years old when he stepped on the Bethel stage, and while his solo is thrilling, much of the moment's magic comes from the drummer's sheer youthful abandon. It perfectly encapsulates the ecstasy of having a world of talent and a lifetime of possibilities ahead of you. Watching Shrieve's solo, you might find yourself thinking, "Please tell me this kid made it, that he wasn't just another rock casualty." Not to worry. Still very much active at 69, he's a Rock and Roll Hall of Famer who has compiled a distinguished and varied career; *Rolling Stone* readers named Shrieve one of the top 10 drummers of all time.

**What were some of your musical influences?** As a kid I aspired to be a jazz drummer. I was also very much into James Brown, and I grew up in the San Francisco Bay area, where of course the whole hippie thing was happening. I was into the Beatles, and around S.F. there were the Jefferson Airplane and Grateful Dead and Janis Joplin—you couldn't avoid that scene if you were a musician.

**How did you hook up with Santana?** I saw them in a church dance in Redwood City, where I grew up. I was with my brother, Kevin, who's also a musician [a guitarist], and I said, "That's a band I want to play with." At the Fillmore in San Francisco there was a weekend called Super Session, with Michael Bloomfield on guitar and Stephen Stills and Al Kooper. I pulled on Bloomfield's pant leg from down below, just so I could say I asked to play with them, and the next thing you know I was sitting in. That's where I met the manager and bass player of Santana and they were thinking of getting a new drummer. I didn't really hear from them, then one night I went to a recording studio in San Mateo, and

as I was walking in, their drummer was walking out. They'd just had a falling out. I ended up jamming with them and they asked me if I wanted to join the band, then and there. I woke up my parents and said, "Okay, see you later."

**At Woodstock, did you have the feeling it was something special?** Well, it felt really special; it had been building up for several weeks. We had rented a house in the Woodstock area—we'd been on the road and had some time off. You would hear news reports in the evening about the highways being closed down. We had to fly into the concert on a helicopter—that revealed how many people were there and that was pretty mind-bending. But I would have to say nobody really realized what it would become until after the movie came out—everything blew up then. Of course, you don't know that 50 years later people will still be talking about it; that's been the big surprise. At the 40th anniversary, I realized, Boy, this thing is still sticking around in the communal psyche. People are still into it. I think that's when it really hit me. Though all my life people have been coming up to tell me, "I loved you in *Woodstock*."

**You looked like you were in some otherworldly trance during "Soul Sacrifice."** I *was* in a trance. If I listen to that drum solo without the video, I'm not so excited about it. The next year I did a much better one that was filmed at Tanglewood. But when I watch the film, I completely understand why people react the way they do. It's true: I'm young, I'm playing this tribal music, and I'm joyous. There's no other way to put it but that I'm in a trance and I'm feeling complete joy. And there it is captured on film. So, it doesn't really matter what I played; the joy and enthusiasm and excitement is all there for everyone to see and I think that's what got to people.

**What did Woodstock change for you guys?** It put us on the world stage as soon as the movie came out. It changed everything. On a personal level, it catapulted me into an area I never dreamed of. It's had a tendency to overshadow other things that I've done. And up until I was around 35 years old, I had a great amount of resentment for that. "Oh, God, I'm gonna be known for something I did when I was 20." But at 35 I said to myself, "Just shut up. Be gracious and grateful that people were moved by it, and just get on with your life and do whatever the hell you want to do."

**Did you work well with Santana?** We worked well together for quite a while, but we succumbed to the same things most groups did, in terms of drugs. After a time, I got completely out of that—got a guru, no drugs, worked harder at being a musician. We made great music together and then it started splitting apart. Not just because of the drugs but musically we went off into different directions.

**What do you think is Woodstock's legacy?** It was the first time, really since the American Revolution, that people started questioning the government's intentions, and authority in general. And life as we knew it changed. I think the psychedelic drugs had a lot to do with it, opening a door to possibilities. You realized you didn't have to live like everyone said you had to live, and Woodstock was a culmination of that. To show the numbers of people who were sort of vibrating at that same frequency, this glorious surprise of, Hey, wow, these are all my brothers and sisters, we've all been in the same place but we haven't had a way to connect until now.

*Woodstock* film, showcases the electrifying stick work of 20-year-old drummer Michael Shrieve. Santana wrapped up the gig with "Fried Neckbones and Some Home Fries."

"I went out and saw this ocean as far as I could see," Carlos Santana recalled of the crowd. "An ocean of flesh and hair and teeth and hands… I just prayed that the Lord would keep me in tune and in time… It was like plugging into a whole bunch of hearts… It was incredible. I'll never forget the way the music sounded, bouncing up against a field of bodies." Added vocalist and keyboardist Gregg Rolie, "If I had known what it was all about and what Woodstock ended up meaning, I probably would have been frightened to death."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** The festival catapulted Santana to fame. Just weeks after Woodstock, the group's debut album was a smash, peaking at No. 4 on the *Billboard* 200 pop chart, with "Evil Ways" a Top 10 single. The next album, *Abraxas,* featuring the hit "Black Magic Woman," proved another chart-topper. With numerous personnel changes, Carlos Santana has kept the band going for 50 years, its popularity ebbing and flowing but with undeniable peaks—such as its 1998 induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and 1999's No. 1 album *Supernatural,* with smash singles "Smooth" and "Maria Maria." The classic lineup— Santana, Shrieve, Rolie, Neal Schon, Michael Carabello—reunited in 2016 for *Santana IV.* In 2019, Santana was headlining a multi-year residency at House of Blues in Las Vegas and touring to promote a new album.

## John Sebastian

**3:30–4:00 PM**

After Santana's set, the rains came down, the next group wasn't ready to play, and electrical problems were hampering the sound system. Lighting designer Chip Monck feared a lull might stall the concert, so he collared a bona fide star who wasn't scheduled to appear at the festival. John Sebastian had vaulted to fame as founder and front man of the Lovin' Spoonful, the folk-blues group that had turned out such hits as "Do You Believe in Magic" and "Summer in the City." The band broke up in 1968, and the 25-year-old Sebastian, who lived near the festival site and was working on his first solo album, came up to Yasgur's farm purely as a spectator. "I ended up backstage because I knew everybody," he recalled. "These were all people I had played with, hung out with, sat around tables smoking dope with. This was absolute community. I felt very much at one with the whole group."

Monck pressed him into service—realizing he had the star power to keep the crowd riveted. Borrowing a guitar from pal Tim Hardin, the warm-voiced singer "had dropped some acid, but went on anyway, talking to the audience like they were old friends," Lang wrote. "I simply love whoever is here," Sebastian said before his first song. "Clean up some trash as you leave and it will all go for the best." He sang five songs: "How Have You Been?" "Rainbows All Over Your Blues," "I Had a Dream," "Darlin' Be Home Soon," and "Younger Generation." The crowd loved it, and by the time Sebastian finished, the rain had stopped. The impromptu performance, which he nevertheless dismissed as one of his worst, also supplied a memorable image (right) by the now revered rock photographer Henry Diltz. "I've spent years living down the outfit I was wearing," Sebastian said. "It was tie-dyed Levis jeans and jacket. My Woodstock 'suit of lights,' as someone called it."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Now 75, Sebastian went on to release several solo albums and scored a huge hit in 1976 with the theme song to the sitcom *Welcome Back, Kotter.* He has worked steadily as a session man for other artists, frequently contributes to film and TV soundtracks, and wrote a 1993 children's book, *JB's Harmonica*. A Rock and Roll and Songwriters hall of famer, Sebastian continues to tour.

**THE GREAT SONGWRITER AND troubadour John Sebastian was not scheduled to play Woodstock, but he agreed to step in to fill a gap in the schedule. Though Sebastian would later lament his tie-dyed outfit, that denim jacket now hangs in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.**

**THE REVOLUTIONARY GARB OF some attendees provided side entertainment, even if some kids were, in reality, just hippies-for-a-weekend. For those who took things a bit too far, the medical tent (opposite), managed by the Hog Farm, provided care for injuries—whether physical or maladies of the head brought on by a surfeit of psychotropics.**

## Keef Hartley Band

**4:45–5:30 PM**

After Sebastian took his bows, Woodstock experienced its first bit of British invasion with the Keef Hartley Band. It would also turn out to be one of the festival's lost performances. Hartley was a respected drummer from Lancashire who had made his name with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers. After forming his own group, Hartley released several albums; his music was jazz-inflected and he was popular in small clubs, often appearing dressed as a Native American, complete with headdress and war paint. The specifics of his festival set are a bit murky because Hartley doesn't appear on any Woodstock soundtracks; nor is he featured in the *Woodstock* documentary, reportedly over a contract dispute. Thus his performance exists only on videos taken by audience members. According to the most reliable accounts, the set included "Spanish Fly," "She's Gone," "Too Much Thinking," "Believe in You," and a medley: "Sinnin' for You," "Leaving Trunk," and "Just to Cry."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Hartley made several albums with his band and a couple of solo efforts, then drifted out of the music business in the 1990s. He died in 2011, at 67.

## Incredible String Band

**6–6:40 PM**

An innovative psychedelic folk group from Scotland, the Incredible String Band had a large following in the U.K. but was essentially unknown to U.S. audiences. The quartet—Mike Heron, Robin Williamson, Christina "Licorice" McKechnie, and Rose Simpson—who lived communally in Wales, often harmonized with exotic instruments from around the world. At Woodstock, their 40-minute set passed with little notice from the crowd—and was not included in the documentary. It didn't help that the soft ensemble had been initially scheduled to appear Friday night with other acoustic-oriented acts but got rained out; instead they wound up sandwiched in between the louder and more raucous Keef Hartley Band and the bluesy Canned Heat. "As a group, we just wanted to get it over with," Simpson told writer Peter Kurtz earlier this year. "We knew that it wouldn't work with all the audience hyped up on volume and power and superb musicianship . . . We had another gig in New York that night and had to get out and away. We did sort of recognize that this was special, and that the New World was dawning in some ways, but [we'd] had an awful, sleepless, cold, and miserable night."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** The Incredible String Band hung on for several more years, then split up in 1974. Founders Heron and Williamson reunited from around 1999 to 2003. Simpson, meanwhile, went on to earn a doctorate in German literature and become Lady Mayoress (an honorary title) of the seaside university town of Aberystwyth, Wales, where she had worked. Licorice McKechnie is one of rock's enduring mysteries. An enigmatic character, the singer-percussionist literally disappeared three decades ago—some say she was last seen in 1987, hitchhiking in Arizona.

## Canned Heat

**7:30–8:30 PM**

As night began to fall, Canned Heat took its turn. Founded in 1966 by burly and bearded vocalist Bob "the Bear" Hite and Alan "Blind Owl" Wilson (guitar/harmonica/vocals), the bluesy L.A. band had gained national popularity and was a favorite at major festivals, with two big hit singles, "Going Up the Country" and "On the Road Again." The group sang both songs at Woodstock, along with "I'm Her Man," Sam Cooke's "A Change Is Gonna Come," "Leaving This Town," and a 20-minute improvised jam called "Woodstock Boogie." The hour-long set stoked the crowd, which had grown a bit restive. At one point a concert-goer jumped onstage, but the band was unfazed—in fact, Hite jovially accepted a hug. What fans didn't know was that Canned Heat had nearly cancelled their appearance entirely. Two days before the festival, guitarist Henry Vestine clashed with bassist Larry Taylor—and drummer Adolfo de la Parra threatened to quit over the episode. Somehow Hite and Wilson talked him out of it and found a substitute guitarist for Vestine, Harvey Mandel, who stayed with the band for about a year.

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** In 1970, Wilson died at 27 of accidental acute barbiturate intoxication—his body was found on a hillside behind cofounder Hite's home in Topanga Canyon; as for Hite, in 1981 he was playing North Hollywood's Palomino Club when a fan handed him a drug vial between sets. Believing it to be cocaine, Hite stuck a straw in it and snorted. Instead, it turned out

**DURING A CROWD-PLEASING set by Canned Heat, an exuberant fan jumped up onstage, approached lead singer Bob "the Bear" Hite, and gave him, well, a bear hug. In the spirit of the occasion, Hite good-naturedly let the guy take one of his cigarettes. There was less joy in Mudville following the performance of the Grateful Dead. The band members were—no surprise—high when they took the stage and delivered, by their own admission, a distinctly subpar performance. As the band's guitarist and spiritual leader Jerry Garcia (opposite) would confess when recalling it later, "We were plumb atrocious."**

to be heroin. Hite turned blue, collapsed, and died later that evening at 38. Nevertheless, Canned Heat persisted. De la Parra kept the band going, with numerous personnel changes; he and Taylor are both in the current lineup. Later in 2019 Canned Heat is expected to tour Germany.

## Mountain

**9–10 PM**

A seminal influence on heavy metal and hard rock, Mountain was one of the great Woodstock success stories. The creation of guitarist and vocalist Leslie West and Cream producer Felix Pappalardi, a guitarist, Mountain had only three gigs under its belt when it signed on to appear at Woodstock. Joining West and Pappalardi were drummer Norman "N.D." Smart and Steve Knight, a keyboard player who was a Woodstock native. "They were another new face and the crowd loved them," Lang wrote. "Especially on standards like 'Stormy Monday' and a [Cream bassist] Jack Bruce epic, 'Theme from an Imaginary Western.'" All told, the newcomers did nine songs, including an ode to the festival they dubbed "For Yasgur's Farm." It was a star-making—and earsplitting—appearance. "I think I had the most amplifiers of anybody there," West remembered. "It was paralyzing because that stage, that setting, was some kind of natural amphitheater. The sound was so loud and shocking that I got scared. But once I started playing, I just kept going because I was afraid to stop."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Their festival turn made Mountain famous overnight. The band toured extensively, disbanded in 1972—West blamed it on drug use and road weariness—and briefly re-formed two years later. In 1983 Pappalardi, 41, was shot to death by his wife, Gail, in their New York City apartment. West reunited Mountain on and off over the years until 2010. West, who had his lower right leg amputated because of severe complications from diabetes in 2011, still performs solo at the age of 73.

## Grateful Dead

**10–10:45 PM**

The Dead—Jerry Garcia, Bob Weir, Phil Lesh, Ron "Pigpen" McKernan, Bill Kreutzmann, and Mickey Hart—came up during the rise of the San Francisco counterculture movement and first gained notice as the house band for writer Ken Kesey's LSD parties. Certainly, no band more exemplifies the psychedelic '60s or has inspired a more devoted cohort of fans. But Deadheads may have been disappointed with their heroes' performance at Woodstock, which was sabotaged by weather and technical problems. For one thing, the Dead's equipment was exceptionally heavy, which strained the stability of the stage almost to the point of collapse. What's more, the rains came once again, causing some frightening electrical difficulties: Garcia and Weir both experienced jarring shocks when touching their electric guitars or approaching the mics—Weir, in fact, was thrown across the stage at one point. With constant interruptions between numbers, one as long as 10 minutes, the Dead

performed just five songs: "St. Stephen," "Mama Tried," "Dark Star," "High Time," and "Turn On Your Lovelight," a finale that turned into a 40-minute jam. The band—most of whom were high when they went on stage—knew they'd essentially bombed and requested that their set be excluded from the *Woodstock* album and film. "Jeez, we were awful—we were plumb atrocious," Garcia remembered. "Some built their career at Woodstock," Weir said. "We spent a decade trying to forget it."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Their shabby outing at the festival did nothing to dim the Dead's reputation as an iconic rock band. Singer and keyboardist McKernan, who tended to eschew drugs but drank so heavily that it destroyed his health, died at 27 in 1973. Cofounder Garcia, certainly the public face and guiding spirit of the group, died of a heart attack at 53 in 1995 after a long period of physical decline. The group then disbanded, though surviving bandmates have reunited occasionally and continue to perform.

## Creedence Clearwater Revival

**1–1:50 AM**

With hits like "Proud Mary," "Bad Moon Rising," and "Green River," the bluesy pop-rockers from San Francisco (not the Bayou) were one of the nation's hottest acts in 1969 and perhaps the most hotly anticipated name on the Woodstock bill. But it sure didn't seem that way when, CCR—John Fogerty (lead vocals, guitar, and composer); his rhythm guitarist brother Tom; bassist Stu Cook; and drummer Doug Clifford—began their 11-song set at one a.m., a few hours after the Grateful Dead had left the stage. "I'm rocking and screaming," John Fogerty recalled, "and about three songs into the set, I look out past the floodlights, and I see about five rows of bodies intertwined—they're all asleep! I just looked out there and I said, 'Well, we're up here having a great time. I hope some of you are, too . . .' It was sort of like a painting of a Dante scene, just bodies from hell, all intertwined and asleep. And this is the moment I will never forget as long as I live: a quarter mile away in the darkness . . . there was some guy flicking his Bic [lighter], and in the night I hear, 'Don't worry about it, John. We're with you.' I played the rest of the show for that guy." After 10 songs, the crowd had come alive, demanding an encore—the rockabilly standard "Suzie Q."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** CCR kept banging out hits, but internal conflicts broke up the band in 1972. Things got especially acrimonious between the Fogerty brothers, who had come to a tenuous reconciliation by the time 48-year-old Tom died in 1990 of complications from AIDS due to a tainted blood transfusion during back surgery. A successful solo performer for decades, John still tours and records at 74.

## Janis Joplin

**2:30–3:30 AM**

The voice—raucous, gutsy, blues-tinged—is unmistakable, the broad face and wild, russet locks instantly recognizable. Janis Joplin was a born rebel, a Texas twister who roared into

**IT WAS 2:30 A.M. WHEN THE incomparable Janis Joplin hit the stage, later than she had expected to sing. Fueled by her beloved Southern Comfort, her amazing voice still ruled the night, even if, some said, it wasn't her finest performance. Creedence Clearwater Revival was one of the most anticipated bands. But when front man John Fogerty (opposite, at far right) looked out at the crowd, he found many of his fans asleep.**

San Francisco, made her name with the psychedelic band Big Brother & the Holding Company, and emerged as a breakout performer of the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival. By the time she got to Woodstock, Joplin had achieved superstar status, but she was also bedeviled by addiction to heroin (and by her notorious trademark guzzling of Southern Comfort). Those excesses likely marred her gig at Woodstock—believing she'd be on earlier, Joplin had spent hours drinking and drugging before she and her Kozmic Blues Band unleashed a 10-song set at 2:30 a.m., and the singer likely wasn't at her best. "I was a little disappointed," Michael Lang wrote. "Of course, Janis's voice was as amazing as ever, but she kept turning around to give directions to the other musicians." The pumped concertgoers didn't seem to mind, though, as Joplin belted out songs such as Gershwin's "Summertime," and Otis Redding's "I Can't Turn You Loose," during which she kicked off her shoes and danced barefoot while saxophonist Cornelius "Snooky" Flowers took the lead. Lang wrote, "Her devastating testifying on 'Try (Just a Little Bit Harder)' and 'Work Me Lord' crushed the audience, and they begged her not to stop."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Joplin's meteoric life and career came to a crashing end scarcely more than a year after Woodstock; on October 4, 1970, she was found dead of an accidental heroin overdose (maybe impacted by alcohol). Joplin was just 27, the same age as Jimi Hendrix, who had died just a couple of weeks earlier. Her biggest hit, a cover of Kris Kristofferson's "Me and Bobby McGee," was released posthumously in 1971—and her legacy endures both as a towering and influential talent and a tragic, cautionary tale.

## Sly and the Family Stone

**4–5 AM**

There was something otherworldly about it: In the middle of a dairy farmer's field at four in the morning, this pioneering, multiracial, funk-soul-rock-psychedelic band led by a spectacularly charismatic singer and multi-instrumentalist, all decked out in spangles and fringes, was whipping hundreds of thousands of people into a frenzy. Hugely successful, thanks to hits like "Dance to the Music," "Everyday People," and "I Want to Take You Higher," Sylvester "Sly" Stone and his Family did not disappoint. Far from it, many considered their set the apex of Woodstock. "I got to witness the peak of the festival, which was Sly Stone," Carlos Santana said. "I don't think he ever played that good again—steam was literally coming out of his Afro." The highlight was a call-and-response during "I Want to Take You Higher." Stone would shout "Higher!" into the crowd, and the attendees, as journalist Ellen Sander wrote, "boomed back with the force of half a million voices at their loudest . . . joyously, desperately, arms

**MANY WHO WERE THERE would say that the peak performance of the entire festival came from the vibrant funk of Sly and the Family Stone at four a.m. Despite the hour, Sly Stone (opposite) lived up to his lyrics when he sang to his ecstatic listeners, "I want to take you higher!" Perhaps more than any single artist in that weekend's parade of talent, Sly and his big brassy band lit up the Woodstock night.**

and hands and fingers raised in peace signs, heads and voices crying out into the night, crying the anguished plea of the '60s, 'Higher, higher!'"

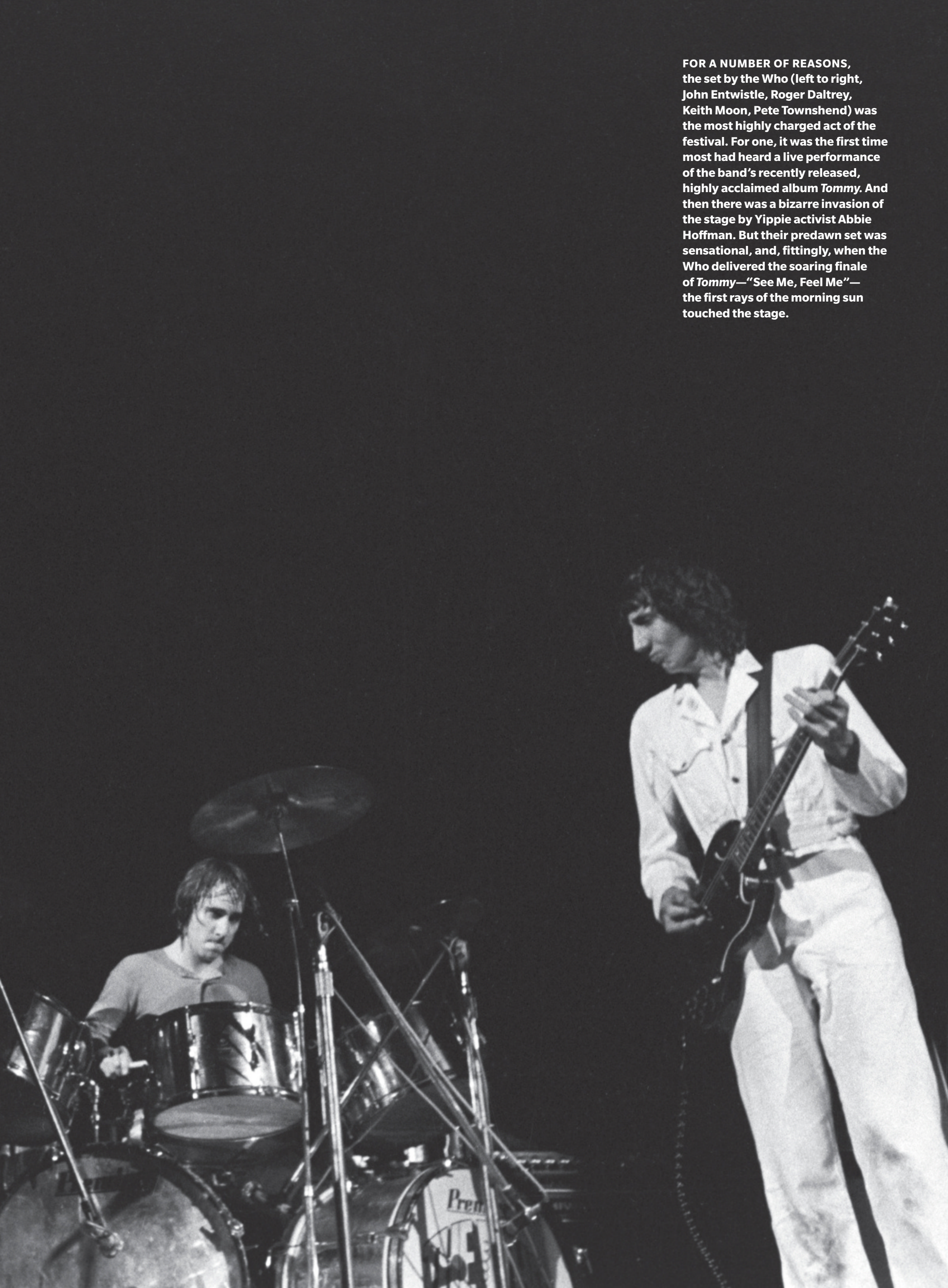
**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Sly & Co. were at their peak and would be a seminal influence on the disco movement of the 1970s, but drugs and dissension would bring the group down—not least their leader. Stone's voracious cocaine consumption made him increasingly erratic, volatile, and unreliable. After the group disbanded in 1975, Stone went solo, with far less success. Meanwhile his personal troubles spiraled amid continued substance abuse and various legal entanglements, and he became a reclusive figure, at one point descending into homelessness. In 2015 Stone was awarded $5 million in a lawsuit against his former manager and lawyer for unpaid royalties, but a judge overturned the decision. The singer is now 76; a documentary on his turbulent life and career is due out this year.

## The Who

**5:30–6:35 AM**

Though the British rockers put on a great show, their appearance included one of Woodstock's few sour notes. The Who—creative force Pete Townshend, bass guitarist John Entwistle, drummer Keith Moon, and singer Roger Daltrey—were bona fide stars. Their 1965 single "My Generation," was a teen anthem, and they'd made a huge splash at Monterey Pop. Indeed, the group's theatrical live gigs—with Daltrey's soaring vocals and guitar virtuoso Townshend's fiercely rhythmic style, often with his famed windmilling flourish (and sometimes ending in a smashed instrument)—were sensational. The Who had just released what many consider their masterpiece, the rock opera *Tommy,* much of which they

CONTINUED ON PAGE 64



**FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS, the set by the Who (left to right, John Entwistle, Roger Daltrey, Keith Moon, Pete Townshend) was the most highly charged act of the festival. For one, it was the first time most had heard a live performance of the band's recently released, highly acclaimed album *Tommy*. And then there was a bizarre invasion of the stage by Yippie activist Abbie Hoffman. But their predawn set was sensational, and, fittingly, when the Who delivered the soaring finale of *Tommy*—"See Me, Feel Me"—the first rays of the morning sun touched the stage.**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 61

performed at Woodstock, including "It's a Boy," "1921," "Amazing Journey," "Sparks," "Eyesight to the Blind," "Acid Queen," and "Pinball Wizard."

But at one point, Yippie leader Abbie Hoffman, incensed because he felt there wasn't sufficient political consciousness at the festival, ran up onstage and implored the crowd to support John Sinclair, a fellow activist who had been sentenced to 10 years in prison for possessing a marijuana joint. (He would be released in 1971.) "You can't make a speech in the middle of their set!" Lang recalled telling Hoffman backstage. "Chill out!" But Hoffman, who some said had dropped acid, insisted. While Townshend adjusted his amp, the antiwar icon grabbed a mic and berated the human carpet laid out across Max Yasgur's acreage. "Hey, all you people having fun while John Sinclair is being held a political prisoner!" he cried. At that, the notoriously truculent Townshend screamed, "F--- off my f---ing stage!" and bumped Hoffman with the neck of his guitar. (Some—including Hoffman himself—said it was accidental, others not.)

The Who resumed—Townshend flying around the stage like a dervish—and finished off *Tommy* as dawn broke, with "We're Not Gonna Take It," and Daltrey's impassioned "See Me, Feel Me." The Brits wrapped up with an explosive series of songs: "Summertime Blues," "Shakin' All Over," "My Generation," and "Naked Eye." The Who had conquered America, though Townshend would always disparage the festival and its ethos. "All these hippies wandering about thinking the world was going to be different from that day on," he wrote. "As a cynical English arseh---, I walked through it all and felt like spitting at the lot of them, trying to make them realize that nothing had changed and nothing was going to change. Not only that, what they thought was an alternative society was basically a field full of six-foot-deep mud laced with LSD. If that was the world they wanted to live in, then f--- the lot of them." Daltrey was more

**THE BACKSTAGE BOARDS proved a handy place to hang out and have a smoke for idle rockers and friends. Among those in this gathering were Paul Kantner (far left), Jack Casady (in striped shirt), Grace Slick (center), and Spencer Dryden (in hat)—all of the Jefferson Airplane—and (standing at right) Country Joe McDonald (in bandana) and Fillmore Auditorium impresario Bill Graham.**

sanguine. "It made our career," he said of the festival. "We were a huge cult band, but Woodstock cemented us to the historical map of rock 'n' roll."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** The Who is, of course, one of the dominant rock groups in music history. The manic and colorful Moon died from a prescription drug overdose in 1978, but the band played on—though relations between members were volatile and there were numerous breakups, hiatuses, and reunions. Townshend and Daltrey became estranged but rekindled a close friendship after Entwistle's death in 2002 at 57 from a cocaine-induced heart attack. Both in their mid-seventies they still perform together and separately. Townshend has also turned to writing fiction; his debut novel, *The Age of Anxiety,* is due out in November 2019.

## Jefferson Airplane

**7–8:45 AM**

Following the Who at the top of their game would have been an unenviable task, especially after you've been partying for 24 hours, but the bleary-eyed Jefferson Airplane gave it a shot. The West Coast flower power rockers—lead singer Grace Slick, Marty Balin, Paul Kantner, Jorma Kaukonen, Jack Casady, Spencer Dryden, and guest keyboardist Nicky Hopkins—did some of their biggest hits, including "White Rabbit" and "Somebody to Love," along with the haunting and apocalyptic "Wooden Ships," a Kantner–David Crosby–Stephen Stills composition. By these early morning hours, much of the crowd was zonked out, and the band wasn't far behind. "We'd been up all night and I sang the goddamned songs with my eyes closed, sort of half asleep and half singing," Slick said. "We probably could have played better if we'd

**THE LODGING AT THE FESTIVAL campgrounds was a motley assortment of tents, tarps, and tepees. And those were the luxury accommodations. Many, of course, made do with no shelter at all.**

been more awake, but part of the charm of rock 'n' roll is that sometimes you're ragged." As Lang remembered, "They were exhausted, as were we all. Our newly created city was cast off into some crazy dreams by their trippy morning lullaby."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Fraught with personal tensions—the disillusioned Dryden was essentially kicked out of the band—the Airplane hung on for a couple more years before breaking up. Kaukonen and Casady formed Hot Tuna; from 1969 to 1979, meanwhile, Jefferson Airplane morphed into Jefferson Starship. With varying membership—including Slick, Kantner, and Balin—it logged a hit single, 1985's "We Built This City," which would top a *Rolling Stone* readers poll of the worst songs of the 1980s. (*GQ* magazine ordained it the worst song of all time.) Kantner died of multiple organ failure and septic shock at 74 on January 28, 2016—on the same day and at the same age as another founding member, singer Signe Toly Anderson, died. Balin died at 76 in 2018. One of rock's great divas, Slick retired from the music business in the late 1990s and at 79 devotes herself to painting and drawing. ●

**A SURPRISING NUMBER OF tykes and toddlers were scattered throughout the festival. This happy little one would now be in her early fifties—and what a curious thing it would be to have been there and not remember it at all.**

**A HUGE ELEMENT IN THE story of Woodstock—one that cannot be glossed over and that still occupies a big space in the memories of many who were there—was the rain. It brought with it a substantial amount of misery. Even so, Woodstock is largely remembered as a beloved event; perhaps if it hadn't rained, the festival would lack some of its legend.**

# Day Three

## Sunday to Monday, August 17–18

### Joe Cocker

**2–3:30 PM**

If a single number can be said to crystallize the Woodstock experience, a case could be made for one interpreted by a scraggly 25-year-old singer from Sheffield, England, with a coarse, soulful voice—heavily influenced by Ray Charles—and a unique onstage style: arms flailing wildly, strumming an air guitar at times, like a marionette possessed by rhythm and raw emotion. Joe Cocker was born John Robert Cocker but started his career in the early '60s under the stage name Vance Arnold, which he soon abandoned. In 1968, Cocker achieved his first commercial hit with a cover of the Beatles' "With a Little Help from My Friends." Reinventing the tune as an R&B number, he supplanted Ringo Starr's dry (albeit engaging) drone with his own gutsy rasp. The record hit No. 1 on the British charts, but Cocker was relatively unknown to the Woodstock pilgrims as he started off day three at two p.m. Joining Cocker was the Grease Band, led by keyboardist–bass guitarist Chris Stainton, the singer's favorite sideman. Cocker performed a series of covers—Dylan's "Dear Landlord," "Something's Coming On," and "Do I Still Figure in Your Life?—and the response was more or less meh.

But things heated up when the Brit launched into what would be one of his standards, Traffic's "Feelin' Alright?" followed by another Dylan song, "Just Like a Woman," and then Ray Charles's "Let's Go Get Stoned," which, naturally, resonated particularly well with this audience. "I didn't feel that for this mass of people I was getting through until we did 'Let's Go Get Stoned,' which got all of them up because most of them were," Cocker remembered. "When we got into 'With a Little Help from My Friends,' I felt . . . that we'd caught the massive consciousness." On one level, Cocker's "Friends" captured the euphorically communal vibe in Bethel. Moreover, few would ever think of that song the same way—his rendition, immortalized in the *Woodstock* documentary, stands as one of the classic performances in rock history.

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Cocker was transformed into a superstar. His Mad Dogs & Englishmen tour—with Stainton, Leon Russell, and others—was huge, featuring songs such as "The Letter," "Cry Me a River," and the Beatles' "She Came in Through the Bathroom Window," along with songs he sang at Woodstock. Cocker suffered some psychological issues, developed and kicked a heroin habit, and battled alcoholism, but eventually sobered up. He registered a number of hit singles in later years, including "You Are So Beautiful" and "Up Where We Belong," a duet with Jennifer Warnes that was on the soundtrack for the 1982 movie *An Officer and a Gentleman*. Cocker's stage persona inspired a famous impersonation by *Saturday Night Live*'s John Belushi, which somewhat cruelly lampooned his booze-guzzling. As it turned out Cocker long outlived Belushi, who had demons of his own. Cocker died in 2014, at 70, from lung cancer.

### Country Joe and the Fish

**6:30–7:50 PM**

After Cocker's mesmerizing turn, the monsoon rains returned, swamping the area for hours, and turning Yasgur's farm into a vast lake of mud. Many concertgoers began to flee the

**WHILE HE'D ATTRACTED SOME attention back home in Britain, Joe Cocker had little name recognition in America upon his arrival at Woodstock. That changed in a hurry, especially when the quirky singer brought his set to a climax (with a little help from his friends): "Would you believe in a love at first sight?" crooned his bandmates. To which Cocker sweetly replied, "Yes, I'm certain that it happens all the time." The audience was smitten.**

**ANOTHER DRENCHING** rainstorm sent the muddied masses into the streams and ponds on the property, where, with clothes or without, they bathed happily. Some others chose instead to indulge in mud baths, an orgy of slipping and sliding. Either way, the resulting news reports—and photos and films—caused a ripple of rebuke (or perhaps envy?) from the staid "Establishment."

festival, but thousands remained chanting "No rain!" in unison. When the storm passed, a large number of attendees got naked and then jumped into Filippini Pond, where organizers assured them they could bathe. Others seemed happy to roll around in the mud with the carefree abandon of small children on a summer day. "Everyone was just slobbering together," fan Susan Cole recalled. "I mean, Woodstock was just like a big pig sty, a big muddy mess. Everybody was bumping into each other, and slipping and sliding, and it was just like a playpen."

The music resumed in the evening at about six with a return from Country Joe McDonald, now with his Fish. The rain had made it necessary to shut off the electricity, putting the concert on hold, but Country Joe insisted his group could do an acoustic set. He and the Fish played for 80 minutes, ending once again with the "Fish Cheer" and "I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die Rag." Recalled Joe, "I felt completely at home, it was really an amazing free space. In 1969, the counterculture was not a secure place to be. A lot of people didn't like you and would just come up and hit you or arrest you for being a rocker or a hippie. So it was very refreshing to be in a totally free environment where you weren't going to be trashed . . . It became very obvious to me from the word go that this was our turf."

## Ten Years After

**8:30–9:30 PM**

Darkness fell over the festival as the British blues-rock band Ten Years After, fresh off appearances at the Newport Jazz Festival and Seattle Pop Festival, convened in front of a diminishing audience. Once known as the Jaybirds, the group featured master guitarist Alvin Lee, drummer Ric Lee, keyboardist Chick Churchill, and bassist Leo Lyons. There were obstacles to their performance—continuing problems with the audio system, the intrusiveness of the Woodstock documentary film crew (including a young editor named Martin Scorsese) and the suffocating humidity, which made it necessary for the band to retune their instruments between songs. Much of Ten Years After's hour-long set went unrecorded, with one hugely significant exception: a 12-minute rendition of the band's hit "I'm Going Home" that proved one of the highlights of the *Woodstock* film and shot Ten Years After—and especially Alvin Lee, whose virtuosity was on full display—to international renown. Lee considered it a mixed blessing. "Ten Years After grew into something I didn't want—the heavy rock image thing," he said. "But it happened anyway through Woodstock, which was a complete accident, and it really changed a lot of people's attitudes to what we were doing. Before then it didn't seem so important, just go out there and have a good blow and get people off. Suddenly it was really big gigs. Gotta play note for note. The fun seemed to disappear."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Ten Years After carried on as a star act until a 1974 breakup but occasionally reunited over the years. Lee thrived as a solo act until his death at 68 in 2013 after complications from routine surgery. Ric Lee, Lyons, and Churchill all perform in their mid-seventies.

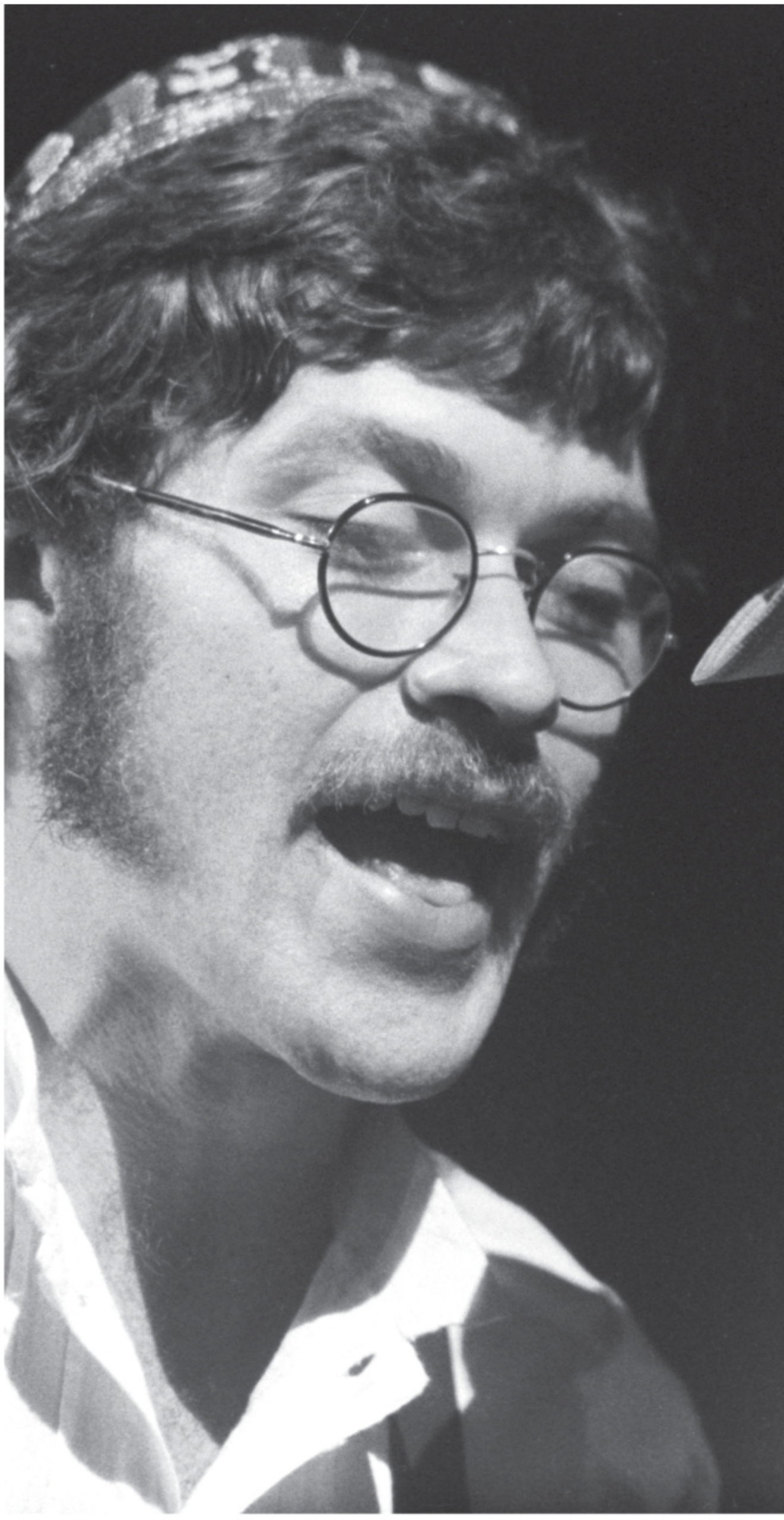
## The Band

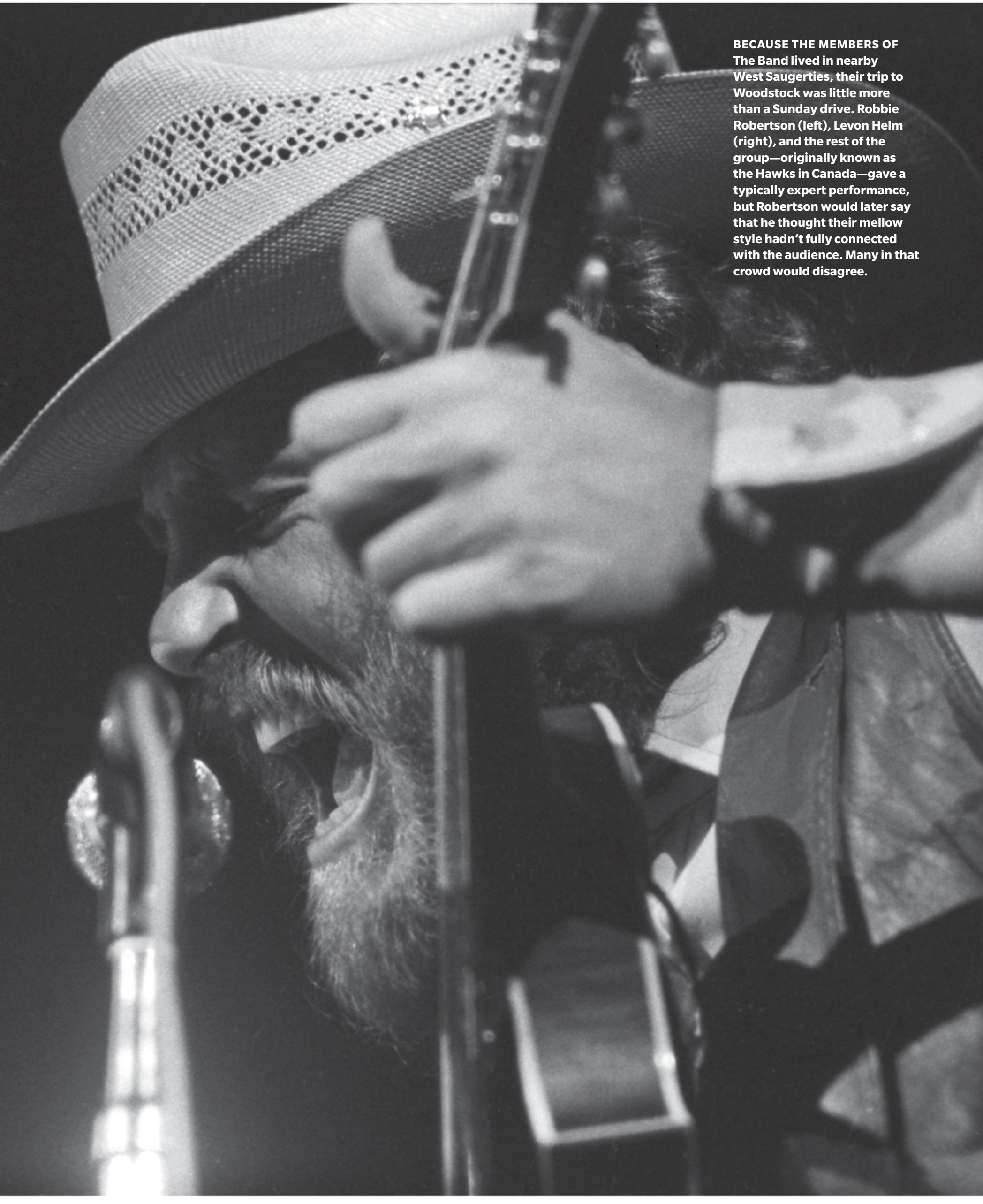
**10–10:50 PM**

They lived nearby in the town of West Saugerties, in a house they'd dubbed Big Pink. The Canadian-American ensemble—Robbie Robertson (lead guitarist,

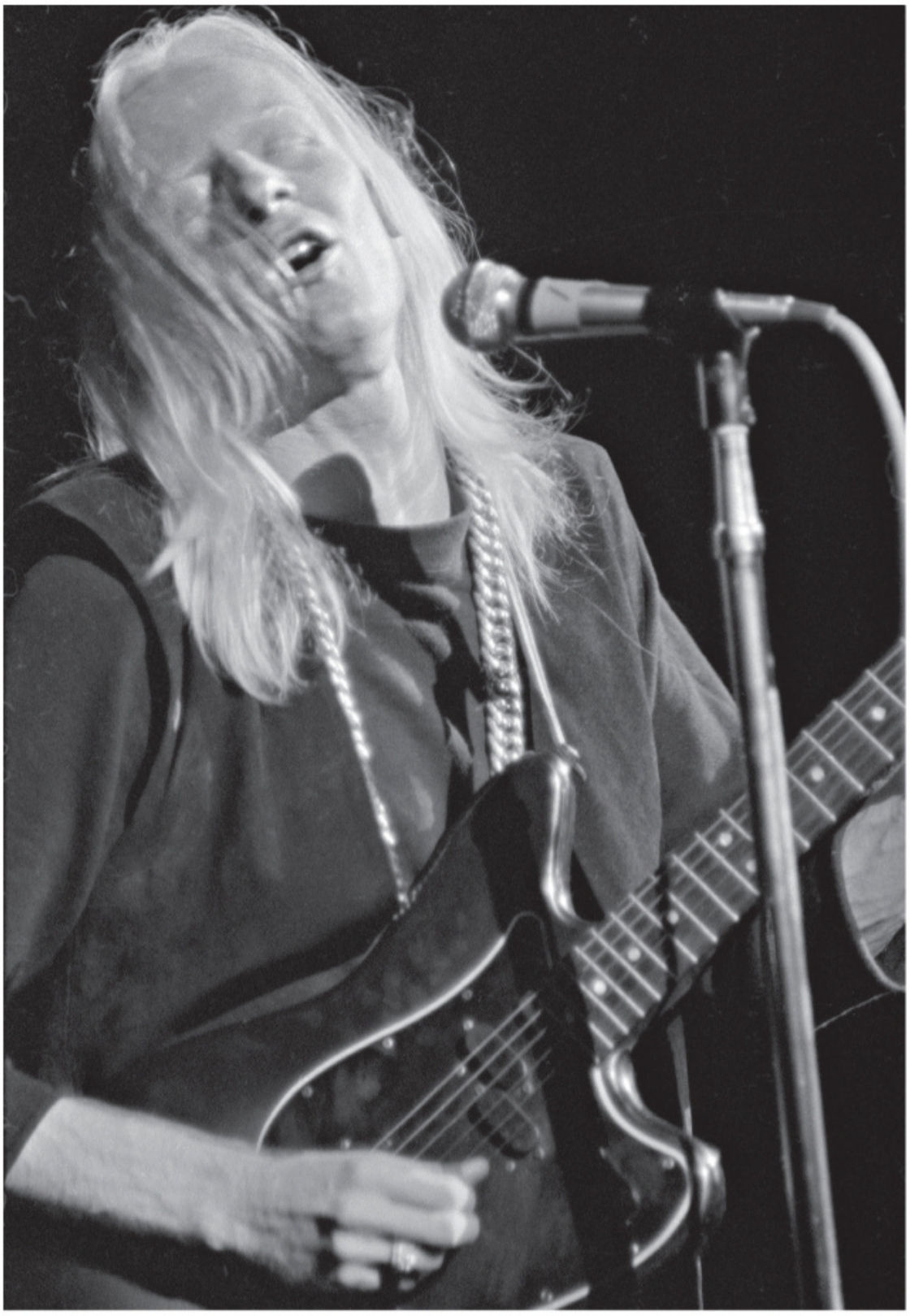
main songwriter), Levon Helm (drums, vocals), Rick Danko (bass guitar, vocals), organist Garth Hudson, and keyboardist and vocalist Richard Manuel—had toured with Bob Dylan. But they had their own unique sound, a blend of blues, country, folk, and rock, made all the more distinctive by the voices of the three main singers: Manuel's sonorous baritone and searing falsetto, Danko's aching tenor, and Arkansan Helm's whiskey drawl. The Band's debut album, 1968's *Music from Big Pink*, drew critical praise and featured the songs "Tears of Rage" and "The Weight," the latter of which was featured in the film *Easy Rider*. At the festival, the group took the stage to what Helm remembered as an "inhuman roar from the dark hillside." Their set included "Chest Fever," "Baby Don't You Do It," "Tears of Rage," "I Shall Be Released," and "The Weight." "We played a slow, haunting set of mountain music," Robertson said. "I remember looking out there, and it seemed as though the kids were looking at us kind of funny. We were playing the same way we played in our living room and that might have given the impression that we weren't up for it . . . As for the event itself, you feel proud to have been a part of it, you feel it was amazing, you feel it was a first . . . But as a musical experience for The Band, we were like orphans in the storm out there."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** The Band wasn't featured in the *Woodstock* film because of contractual wrangling, but the group would get its own big-screen treatment eight years later with Scorsese's *The Last Waltz,* an account of their 1976 farewell concert that is considered one of the greatest music documentaries ever made. Highly influential and squarely on rock's A-list—with other classic hits including "Up on Cripple Creek," and "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down"—The Band drifted apart in the late '70s, reunited in 1983 (sans Robertson, who tired of touring), but suffered a devastating blow when Manuel, who had fallen off the wagon after giving up drink and drugs,





**BECAUSE THE MEMBERS OF The Band lived in nearby West Saugerties, their trip to Woodstock was little more than a Sunday drive. Robbie Robertson (left), Levon Helm (right), and the rest of the group—originally known as the Hawks in Canada—gave a typically expert performance, but Robertson would later say that he thought their mellow style hadn't fully connected with the audience. Many in that crowd would disagree.**



committed suicide in 1986 at 42. The surviving members all went on to solo work and other endeavors. Danko died at 56 in 1999 from heart failure, believed to have been brought on by years of substance use. Helm, who pursued acting—with acclaimed turns in *The Right Stuff* and *Coal Miner's Daughter,* died from throat cancer at 71 in 2012. Robertson, 75, has done a great deal of film and TV score work. Hudson, whom *Time* magazine has called "the most brilliant organist in the rock world," still plays occasional gigs as he nears age 82.

## Johnny Winter

**12–1:10 AM**

The albino blues guitar icon kept things cooking (it was now Monday, an unofficial day four) with his band—including brother Edgar, Tommy Shannon, and "Uncle" John Turner. Texan Winter made his first record at 15 and played small clubs until a Chicago jam session with Mike Bloomfield landed him a gig with the guitar ace at the Fillmore East in New York City. Winter, who performed B.B. King's "It's My Own Fault" that night, got a huge hand, and Columbia offered him $600,000 up front for his self-named first album, thought to be the largest advance in music history at that time. "For about an hour, Winter heated things up," Lang wrote, "playing spectacular slide on a mix of Texas blues, R&B, and early rock 'n' roll, including Chuck Berry's 'Johnny B. Goode' to end his set."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Johnny Winter remained a revered and active performer until his death in 2014, at 70, from emphysema and pneumonia. Edgar Winter, 72, remains an active musician and has contributed to many film, TV, and commercial projects.

## Blood, Sweat & Tears

**1:45–2:45 AM**

The jazz-blues-rock ensemble was something like a small orchestra, with a heavy dose of horns behind the white-soul belting of Canadian lead singer David Clayton-Thomas. By 1969, founding member Al Kooper had left the band, and the group's eponymous second album had won a Grammy, beating out the Beatles' *Abbey Road,* among others. When they convened at Woodstock at 1:45 a.m., BS&T had two monster singles out—"You've Made Me So Very Happy" and "Spinning Wheel." The group's hour-long set would include their next hit, Laura Nyro's "And When I Die." It's difficult to assess the performance because the set wasn't recorded—BS&T's manager couldn't agree on financial terms for the film and album. Saxophonist Fred Lipsius, for one, claimed it was the group's worst outing, in part, he said, because Clayton-Thomas was off pitch.

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** The band most people remember began to peel off in the early '70s. Clayton-Thomas departed in 1972 to pursue a solo career. At 77 he still goes on the road, as does BS&T which, despite myriad personnel changes, continues to tour and record.

## Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young

**3:30–5 AM**

This was only the second public appearance of this now iconic folk-rock supergroup, whose exquisite harmonies (and forward social consciousness) made them essential to the era's soundtrack. The individual members had plenty of cred before forming CSN&Y. Stephen Stills and David Crosby were alums of Buffalo Springfield and the Byrds,

**SOME OF THE SOGGY PILGRIMS** of Woodstock were, by day three, exhausted from exposure and sought shelter anyway and anywhere they could find it. But the show, of course, went on. Even the most despairing of the muddy ones were perhaps soothed by the blues of Johnny Winter (opposite), or buoyed when he and his band bounced into a rousing, crowd-pleasing finale of "Johnny B. Goode."

respectively, while Brit Graham Nash had come from the Hollies. That trio's debut album, *Crosby, Stills & Nash*, had produced the hit single "Marrakesh Express." Shortly thereafter they hooked up with Canadian singer-guitarist-composer Neil Young, another Buffalo Springfield grad (who'd had a somewhat difficult relationship with Stills). "We were scared," Crosby remembered. "Everyone we respected in the whole goddamned music business was standing in a circle behind us when we went on . . . we were the new kids on the block, it was our second public gig, nobody had ever seen us, everybody had heard the record, everybody wondered, 'What in hell are they about?' . . . I was also toasted because we had some of that pullover pot, that incredible Columbian gold that a friend of mine named Rocky had brought."

Jitters and controlled substances notwithstanding, the 3:30 a.m. performance was magical, so much so that CSN&Y and their music would be a central theme of the *Woodstock* film. The set opened with a sublime version of "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes," Stills's multipart paean to former girlfriend Judy Collins. Highlights of their 90-minute set include, among others, the Beatles' "Blackbird," "Helplessly Hoping," "Marrakesh Express," "4+20," "Mr. Soul," "Long Time Gone," "Wooden Ships," and an encore of "Find the Cost of Freedom" and "49 Bye-Byes." Throughout, Neil Young was literally a shadow figure—he objected to Michael Wadleigh's film crew, had no desire to appear on camera, and kept largely out of sight—though not, thankfully, sound.

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** The four men went on to produce more hits, together and separately, through a decades-long cycle of estrangement and reconciliation. Crosby, in particular, has battled personal demons—including heavy substance addiction. In 1982 he spent nine months in a Texas prison on drugs and weapons charges; other drug-related brushes with the law followed. In 1994, Crosby required a liver transplant. He has since kicked hard drugs and still performs at 77. So do Stills, 74, Nash, 77, and the 73-year-old Young.

**THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL OF musical curiosity in advance of the performance of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. Their debut album (sans Young) had been a critical and popular success, but almost no one had yet seen them perform live. The members of the band themselves were, by their own admission, "scared sh--less" as Stephen Stills told the crowd. While the three originals (above, left to right, Stills, David Crosby, Graham Nash) performed up front in the bright lights, Neil Young chose to stay, and play, in the shadows.**

# By the Time We Got to Woodstock

## Joni Mitchell wrote *the* song about the festival—but she wasn't there

Joni Mitchell was all set to appear at Woodstock, but she canceled the day before at the urging of her manager, David Geffen; the morass of traffic, Geffen feared, might keep her from getting to New York City in time to appear on *The Dick Cavett Show,* then one of the most prestigious gigs in the business. "The deprivation of being stuck in a New York hotel room and not being able to go," Mitchell (right) recalled, "provided me with an intense angle on Woodstock. I was one of the fans, [like] a kid who couldn't make it . . . Woodstock, for some reason, impressed me as being a modern miracle, like a modern-day fishes and loaves story. For a herd of people that large to cooperate so well, it was pretty remarkable and there was tremendous optimism. So I wrote the song 'Woodstock' out of these feelings."

The ballad, composed in Geffen's apartment, and popularized by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young (whose slightly altered lyrics are excerpted below), would become an anthem for a generation:

*Well, I came upon a child of God…*
*And I asked him, Tell me, where are you going*
*This he told me*
*Said, I'm going down to Yasgur's Farm…*
*We are stardust, we are golden…*
*And we got to get ourselves back to the garden…*

### Other no-shows

**Bob Dylan**
A local resident, Dylan (below) told Lang he might stop by, but instead sailed with his family to England, where he was scheduled to appear at the Isle of Wight Festival. "I didn't want to be part of that thing," Dylan has said of Woodstock. "That don't excite me. The flower generation—is that what it was? I wasn't into that at all." Dylan did perform at the 25th anniversary festival in '94.

**Simon & Garfunkel**
Weary from touring, they declined.

**The Rolling Stones**
Nope. Mick Jagger was in Australia making a movie (a bomb) called *Ned Kelley.* Keith Richards' girlfriend, Anita Pallenberg, had just given birth to their son, Marlon.

**Jeff Beck Group**
The all-star band—Beck, Rod Stewart, Nicky Hopkins, Aynsley Dunbar, and Ron Wood—were scheduled to play but broke up just before the gig.

**Led Zeppelin**
The heavy metal icons were invited, but their manager preferred that they launch what would be a successful summer tour.

**The Byrds**
They said they'd rather play the Miami Pop Festival, where they would headline. Also, the band, led by Roger McGuinn, didn't think Woodstock would be such a huge deal.

**Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention**
Zappa didn't care for the whole hippie scene. "A lot of mud at Woodstock," he said. "We were invited, we turned it down."

**The Doors**
Jim Morrison had some paranoia about performing outdoors. Guitarist Robby Krieger put it this way: "We never played at Woodstock because we were stupid and turned it down. We thought it would be a second-class repeat of the Monterey Pop Festival." (Keen eyes will spy Doors drummer John Densmore in the *Woodstock* film, stageside, during Joe Cocker's set.)

**Roy Rogers**
The organizers thought it would be a nice—if incongruous—idea to have the famed singing cowboy close out the festival with his signature "Happy Trails." Rogers's manager, unsurprisingly, politely declined.

## Paul Butterfield Blues Band

**6–7:15 AM**

Steeped in Chicago blues, Butterfield's group originally included Michael Bloomfield and Elvin Bishop. They departed in 1966 and '68, respectively, and the leader's six a.m. turn—which was not recorded or filmed—featured Teddy Harris on piano and saxophonist David Sanborn among several horn players. The short, sweet set included blues standards like "Born Under a Bad Sign" and "Driftin' and Driftin'," and was warmly received by the remaining crowd.

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Butterfield, a vocalist and master harmonica player, toured and recorded, sometimes with his mentor, Muddy Waters, up until his 1987 death at 44 from a heroin overdose.

## Sha Na Na

**7:45–8:15 AM**

Perhaps the most incongruous group to appear at Woodstock, the act was both an homage to and a parody of the greased-back '50s; the group started out together at Columbia University. In fact, they put on a pretty spectacular show at concerts, performing a playlist of rock 'n' roll, rockabilly, and doo-wop all decked out in lamé, with powerful, rangy voices and explosively energetic choreography. If you happened to be asleep when Sha Na Na took the stage, you might well have wakened to "Get a Job," "Teen Angel," "Wipe Out" (which a generation of schoolkids drummed on their desks), "Blue Moon," "The Book of Love," "At the Hop," and "Duke of Earl."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Their 90 seconds of screen time in the *Woodstock* movie made Sha Na Na famous and helped ignite a '50s nostalgia craze in the 1970s. Sha Na Na eventually wound up with its own syndicated TV show, which ran from 1977 to 1982. The group—which has changed personnel numerous times—continues to get audiences dancing in the aisles. Many early members went on to careers in academia, law, and medicine.

## Jimi Hendrix

**9–11:15 AM**

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame boldly describes him as "the most gifted

**WHAT REMAINED OF THE dwindling crowd early on Monday morning was treated to one of the stranger inclusions on the Woodstock docket: Sha Na Na (above), a costumed '50s throwback act. But what a show they put on. The surviving audience loved them. Those stoics of Monday morning (it was estimated there may have been as few as 40,000 people left) were rewarded by the festival finale, Jimi Hendrix, opposite, with his newly formed band, Gypsy Sun and Rainbows. The great guitarist dazzled the faithful with his legendary three-minute-and-forty-seven-second "Star-Spangled Banner."**

instrumentalist of all time."

True or not, James Marshall Hendrix of Seattle was inarguably an original whose supernatural mastery of the electric guitar—and unprecedented deployment of high-volume amps and feedback—made him a musical revolutionary who roiled rock 'n' roll in the same way saxophone genius Charlie Parker transformed jazz. After moving to Britain, the Army vet scored three U.K. Top 10 hits with his band the Jimi Hendrix Experience—"Hey Joe," "Purple Haze," and "The Wind Cries Mary." Back in the States, Hendrix made a sensational impression at the Monterey Pop Festival and was the world's highest-paid performer when he closed out the Woodstock festival, at nine a.m., entertaining some 40,000 remaining concertgoers. In trademark red bandana, the lithe guitarist blasted away for two hours, including signature classics such as "Foxy Lady" and "Gypsy Woman." But the pièce de résistance—and a counterculture landmark—was his psychedelic, feedback-distorted rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner," which seemed alternately respectful and disturbing and for many encapsulated the conflicted emotions of a divided, war-weary nation. Hendrix segued into "Purple Haze," then launched into a long instrumental piece later titled "Woodstock Improvisation," followed by "Villanova Junction," before closing the Woodstock Music and Art Fair around 11:15 a.m. with "Hey Joe."

"It was over," Lang wrote. "What had seemed an eternity now felt like the blink of an eye. Nothing would ever be the same again."

**AFTER WOODSTOCK:** Just 13 months after Woodstock, Jimi Hendrix, 27, died in London on September 18, 1970, asphyxiated by his own vomit after overdosing on sleeping pills. His music remains as popular, and his guitar work as revered, as during his lifetime, and his influence on a range of genres—hard rock, heavy metal, funk, grunge, hip-hop—is incalculable. ●

**IN THE EERIE AFTERMATH OF the festival, the great hillside looked much like an abandoned battleground, belying the 60-some hours of music, joy, and amazement that had just transpired there.**

# Forever Young

## The photograph has become a symbol for Woodstock. The loving couple? Still loving

The quintessential image of Woodstock may be the one at right, the blanketed couple embracing on the cover of the *Woodstock* album. Fifty years, two kids, and four grandkids later, that couple—Bobbi and Nick Ercoline—are still very much entwined.

In August 1969, Bobbi Kelly and Nick Ercoline, both 20 and living in Middletown, New York, were hearing reports about the festival traffic jams in nearby Bethel. Their best friend, Jim "Corky" Corcoran, a Marine corporal who had just returned from Vietnam, suggested they go. "I knew it would be something we'd never see again, probably in our lifetime," Nick recalls to LIFE. Along with the "required beverages," the friends piled into Corky's mom's Chevy and headed out. Arriving at the festival on Saturday, they found a spot and stayed through Sunday morning. Nick and Bobbi greeted the dawn with an embrace, as Corky slept under his army blanket (to the right of Nick and Bobbi in the photograph). Bobbi says the irony of the photo taken at a peace festival occurred to her only recently. "Here we are depicted as hippie flower children," she said, "and here is our Marine, lying on the ground." Asked if she and Nick were hippies, Bobbi laughs. "I worked at a bank, and Nick was a college student working two jobs—construction and bartending."

The first time the couple saw the photo was when Corky brought them the album. Today, a copy of the photo—a gift from photographer Burk Uzzle—hangs in their home. Uzzle described the photo to *Smithsonian* magazine in 2009: "Gracie Slick of Jefferson Airplane was singing, bringing up the dawn. And just magically this couple stood up and hugged. They kissed, smiled at each other, and the woman leaned her head on the man's shoulder. I just had time to get off a few frames, then the light was over and the mood was over."

The mood never really ended for the Ercolines. Says Nick, "The mud, the garbage, the chaos—and you see a couple, hugging each other, and this is all we need. That's a pose we've been striking every morning for the past 50 years." Says Bobbi, "That photo has become such an integral part of our lives. When I look at it, I'm so grateful that I can share it with the person I've loved for 50 years." Then she adds, "I think our world needs another Woodstock. We need kindness in our world. We just need more kindness." *—Amy Lennard Goehner*

**IT WAS A SIMPLE, SWEET HUG on the sloppy but serene Sunday morning of Woodstock, a moment that would have been lost to history but for a nearby photographer. For the embracing couple, it is now a treasured memento of their life together.**

# we are stardust...

**What is Woodstock's legacy? As such a unique and unforeseen cultural event it can never, of course, be replicated. But it has propagated hundreds of like-minded celebrations of music, if not always peace and love. It also spawned a film that has allowed the event to live on, only adding to its magical lore**

**ONE MODERN MUSICAL CHILD of Woodstock is the annual Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival in Southern California: two consecutive three-day April weekends of nonstop, multistage music, attracting some 250,000 people.**

**IN 1996, CABLEVISION FOUNDER** Alan Gerry purchased the Woodstock site and launched a plan to create a museum and arts center dedicated to the festival. Opened a decade later as the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, the $100 million complex includes a 15,000-seat pavilion stage, where top musical acts have performed over the years—including some who took the stage at Woodstock, such as Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young; Santana; Arlo Guthrie; and Joe Cocker. The Museum at Bethel Woods, meanwhile, has a 10,000-square-foot exhibition space devoted to the '60s and the legacy of Woodstock.

And what exactly is that legacy? Fifty years on, we're still talking about Woodstock, celebrating it, analyzing it, both as a cultural phenomenon and a musical one. Certainly, the festival's impact was bolstered immeasurably by Michael Wadleigh's three-hour Academy Award–winning 1970 documentary, *Woodstock*, and a longer director's cut released in 1994. With decades of hindsight, the festival is often referred to as simultaneously the apex of idealistic 1960s counterculture and its final gasp, one last party before the flower power dream devolved into post-Vietnam, post-Watergate cynicism and Me Generation materialism. Not four months after Jimi Hendrix played his final chord at Bethel, America witnessed the disastrous Altamont Speedway free festival in December 1969. Billed as "Woodstock West," the concert drew 300,000 people and some of the same bands—plus the Rolling Stones. Far from the muddy Eden of Yasgur's farm, Altamont was marred by fights and deadly violence. Instead of the Hog Farm "Please Force," the Hells Angels were contracted to provide security for the musicians. Rather than Wavy Gravy's "pies and seltzer," they used beer cans, weighted pool cues, and motorcycle chains to harass and intimidate concertgoers. After one altercation, a member of the biker gang wound up stabbing and beating to death Meredith Hunter, an 18-year-old African American student who had drawn a gun on him.

Altamont is often said to have rung a dark curtain down on the psychedelic '60s. But it certainly didn't herald the end of mass music and arts festivals. Succeeding decades would see the Glastonbury Festival in England, Chicago's annual Lollapalooza,

**IN TRIBUTE TO WOODSTOCK,** a plaque commemorates the site (opposite), and the Museum at Bethel Woods (above) celebrates the 1969 festival and the culture of the '60s; in 2009, the center played host to a 40th anniversary concert. Still, the artistic artifact that best preserves the sound and the spirit of Woodstock is Michael Wadleigh's documentary film *Woodstock* (right, the poster), released seven months after the festival in March 1970—the result of 120 miles of film shot by 16 cameras. In his review of the movie at the time, Roger Ebert said, "It may be the best documentary ever made in America." He went on in praise: "The remarkable thing about Wadleigh's film is that it succeeds so completely in making us feel how it must have been to be there."

Burning Man in Nevada, and Coachella in California, to name a few. All could be said to have been inspired by Woodstock and its precursor, the Monterey Pop Festival. "Woodstock was probably less explosive than Monterey when it came to creating a new moment in music," suggests journalist Peter Ames Carlin. "Monterey made San Francisco the center of rock, with Janis, Santana, the Airplane, and so on." While Woodstock did make stars of several artists, such as Santana and Joe Cocker, Carlin notes, the real impact was cultural: "The symbolic creation of a youth-made city, one where everyone was so 'groovy,' was Woodstock's biggest legacy. It did rub off on the artists, in the sense that music of the '70s centered on more adult concerns. Revolution was always a thing, but now music was a little more focused on what happens after the revolution—you build a home, a community, a workable sense of actually living."

Perhaps the last word on Woodstock belongs to the conservative, middle-aged farmer who viewed with wonder the "youth-made city" that sprang up on his rolling fields. "You've proven something to the world," Max Yasgur said, addressing the crowd near the end of the festival. "That a half a million kids—and I call you kids because I have children who are older than you are—a half a million young people can get together and have three days of fun and music, and have nothing *but* fun and music! And I—God bless you for it!" ●

**AMONG THE PROGENY OF Woodstock was a dark version of the festival, the Altamont free concert (above), just four months later, when members of Hells Angels lethally overreacted in the name of security during a performance by Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones. Happier descendants were 1974's California Jam (top, with Ozzy Osbourne) and Woodstock '94 (opposite), a 25th-anniversary festival in Saugerties, New York.**

# Photo Credits

**Front Cover:** Woodstock Ventures LC
**Back Cover** (clockwise from top left): MPTVImages; © Jim Marshall Photography LLC; Elliott Landy/Magnum
**Inside Front Cover:** strathroy/E+/Getty
**Page 1:** Ken Regan/Camera 5
**Pages 2–3:** Barry Z Levine/Premium/Getty

**BACK TO THE GARDEN**
**Page 5:** Blank Archives/Getty; (background) no_limit_pictures/E+/Getty **Pages 6–7:** Bettmann/Getty **Page 8:** Ken Regan/Camera 5
**Page 9:** NY Daily News Archive/Getty

**DOWN TO YASGUR'S FARM**
**Pages 10–11:** Barry Z Levine/Premium/Getty **Pages 12–14:** Henry Diltz (2)
**Page 14** (bottom): Henry Diltz/Corbis/Getty
**Page 15:** Bill Eppridge/LIFE/The Picture Collection **Pages 16–17:** Henry Diltz **Page 17:** John Duprey/NY Daily News Archive/Getty
**Pages 18–19:** © Jim Marshall Photography LLC

**A SONG AND A CELEBRATION**
**DAY ONE**
**Pages 20–21:** Bill Eppridge/LIFE/The Picture Collection **Page 22:** Henry Diltz **Page 23** (from top): Courtesy Tony Abatemarco; Bill Eppridge/LIFE/The Picture Collection **Page 24:** Baron Wolman/Premium/Getty **Pages 25–26:** Elliott Landy/Magnum (2) **Page 27:** Bill Eppridge/LIFE/The Picture Collection **Page 28:** John Dominis/LIFE/The Picture Collection **Page 29:** Bill Eppridge/LIFE/The Picture Collection
**Page 30:** © Jim Marshall Photography LLC
**Page 31:** Jeffrey Ufberg/FilmMagic/Getty
**Page 32:** John Dominis/LIFE/The Picture Collection **Page 33:** Henry Diltz **Pages 34–35:** Elliott Landy/Magnum **Page 36** (from top): © Jim Marshall Photography LLC; Elliott Landy/Magnum **Page 37:** Kate Booker/Redferns/Getty
**Pages 38–39:** © Jim Marshall Photography LLC
**Pages 40–41:** Tom Miner/The Image Works
**Pages 42–43:** © Jim Marshall Photography LLC
**Pages 44–45:** Bill Eppridge/LIFE/The Picture Collection

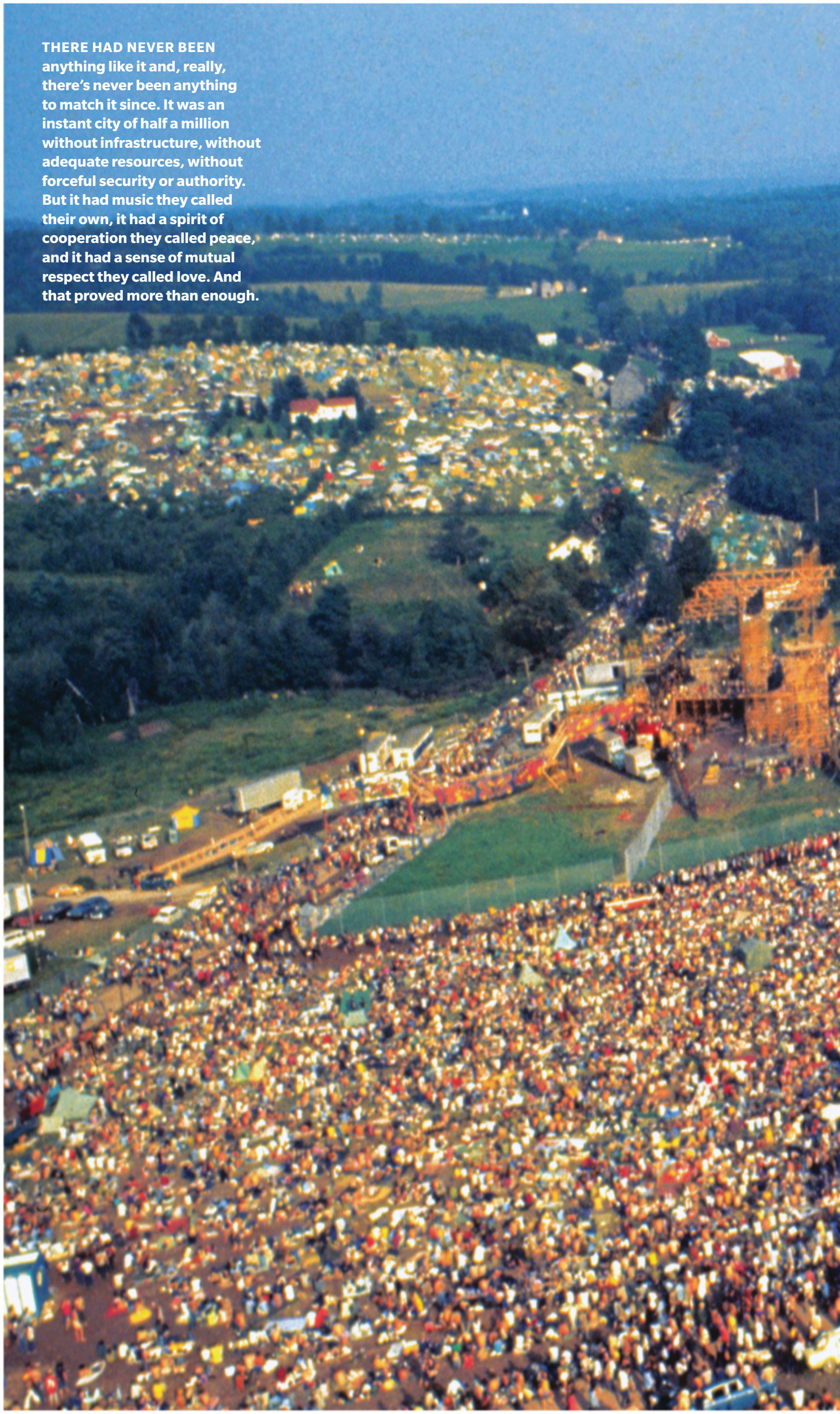
**DAY TWO**
**Pages 46–47:** John Dominis/LIFE/The Picture Collection **Page 48:** Elliott Landy/Magnum **Pages 49–50:** © Jim Marshall Photography LLC (2) **Page 51:** Laura Cavanaugh/Getty **Pages 52-53:** Henry Diltz
**Page 54:** Bill Eppridge/LIFE/The Picture Collection **Page 55:** John Dominis/LIFE/The Picture Collection **Page 56:** © Jim Marshall Photography LLC **Page 57:** Barry Z Levine/Premium/Getty **Page 58:** Elliott Landy/Magnum **Page 59:** Henry Diltz **Page 60:** © Jim Marshall Photography LLC **Page 61:** John Dominis/LIFE/The Picture Collection
**Pages 62–65:** Henry Diltz (2) **Pages 66–67:** John Dominis/LIFE/The Picture Collection
**Pages 68–69:** Jason Laure/The Image Works
**Pages 70–71:** John Dominis/LIFE/The Picture Collection

**DAY THREE**
**Pages 72–73:** Elliott Landy/Magnum
**Pages 74–75:** Bill Eppridge/LIFE/The Picture Collection (2) **Pages 76–77:** Henry Diltz **Page 78:** Elliott Landy/Magnum **Page 79:** Bill Eppridge/LIFE/The Picture Collection **Page 80:** Henry Diltz **Page 81** (from top): David Gahr/Premium/Getty; Elliott Landy/Magnum **Page 82:** Barry Z Levine/Premium/Getty **Pages 83–85:** Henry Diltz (2) **Page 86:** Courtesy Bobbi and Nick Ercoline **Pages 86-87:** Burk Uzzle

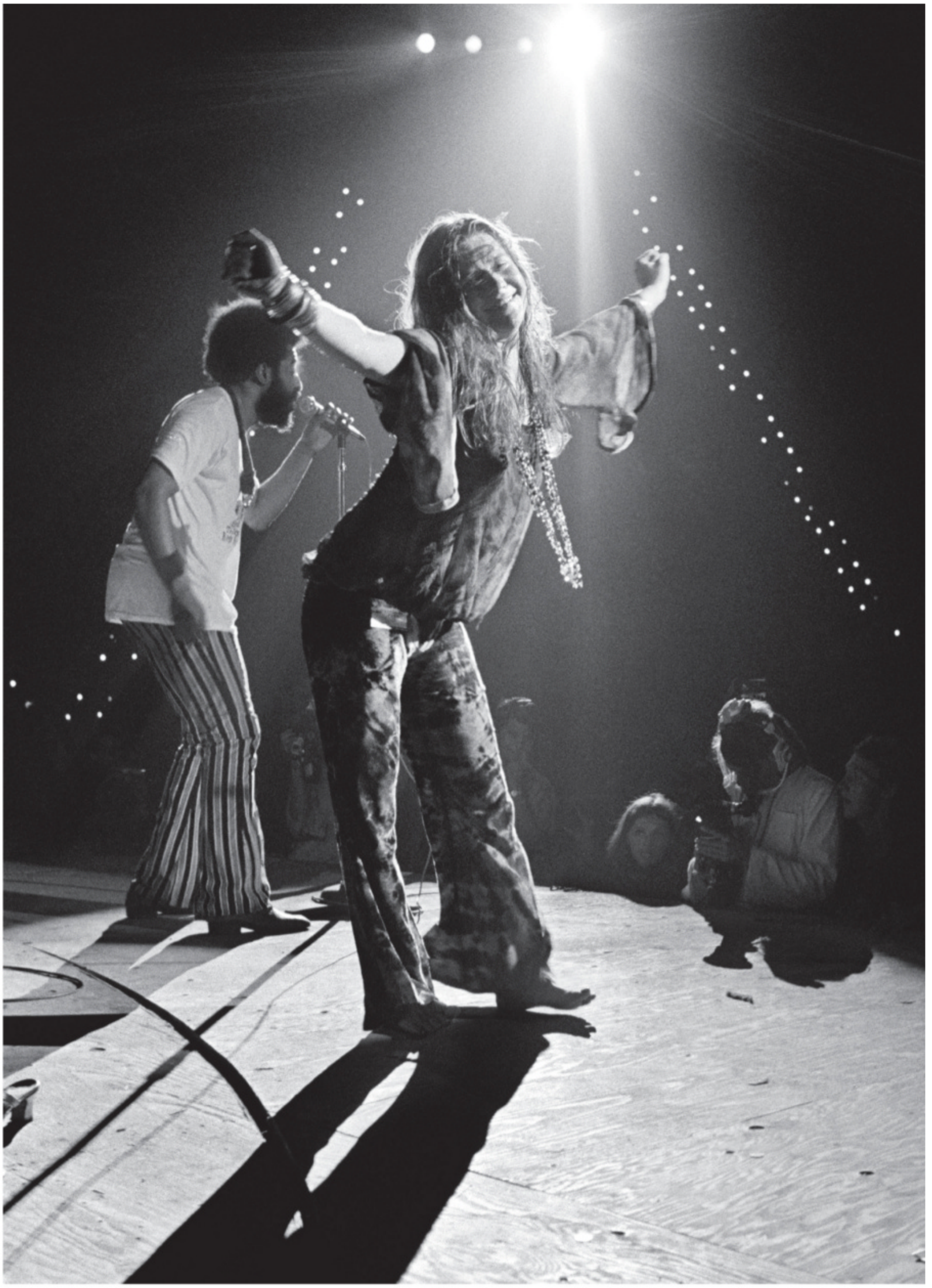
**WE ARE STARDUST . . .**
**Pages 88–89:** Kevin Winter/Getty **Page 90:** Emmanuel Dunand/AFP/Getty **Page 91** (from top): Les Stone/Polaris; Courtesy Everett
**Pages 92** (from top): ABC Photo Archives/Getty; AP/REX/Shutterstock **Page 93:** Mark Reinstein/Corbis/Getty **Pages 94–95:** Barry Z Levine/Premium/Getty

**WE ARE GOLDEN**
**Page 96:** Elliott Landy/Magnum
**Inside Back Cover:** strathroy/E+/Getty

WOODSTOCK and the Dove & Guitar Logo are registered trademarks of Woodstock Ventures LC, and are used with permission.



# we are golden



*Many of the performers made a powerful emotional bond with the vast audience in front of them, including the beloved, bedazzling Janis Joplin.*